

# THE FORGOTTEN CHILDREN

A Netbook for the **Ravenloft**  
and **Gothic Earth** settings

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**Notes from the Kargatane:**

All submissions have been edited to use Americanized spelling. This was done simply to give **THE FORGOTTEN CHILDREN** a more coherent appearance, and should not be meant as a slight against our Anglicized authors. Some articles have been edited for clarity.

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# THE FORGOTTEN CHILDREN

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## INTRODUCTION

People are the key to Ravenloft. While other campaign worlds are often focused around vicious new monsters, bizarre new magical items, or powerful new spells, Ravenloft's heart and soul is in the personalities and histories of the characters of the setting.

No other setting can boast such a proliferation of information about people. From the many detailed Darklords, to the individual creatures of the *Ravenloft Monstrous Compendium II*, to the heroes of *Champions of the Mists*, to the NPCs of the *Children of the Night* series, Ravenloft is just bursting with fully-realized, interesting characters. It's the motivations and desires of these creations that drives everything that happens in the Domains of Dread.

This netbook details more of these characters. They're not heroes, and they're not Darklords. Some of them don't even fit any of Van Richten's groupings. They are the Forgotten Children.

Stuart Turner, *Kargatane*

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

## EVAN LAMORTE

by Marco A. Torres

Here let me sit in sorrow for mankind;  
Like yon neglected shrub at random cast,  
That shades the steep, and sighs at every blast.

**Oliver Goldsmith**  
*The Traveller (1765)*

### Biography

It is possible for evil men to change. Often, however, they do not change until they are about to die, when it is too late to change anything. On rare occasions, though, even the most evil of men are given a second chance. And even more rarely, they use that second chance for good.

### Appearance

Evan appears much as he did in life. He wears the armor of one of Vlad Drakov's Talons, and is clean-shaven, with short, dark brown hair. He also carries the marking of a hawk on his forehead. According to reported sightings, Evan always appears as a normal man, except for the fact that he appears very depressed and does not speak. Upon gazing at the victim(s) who will share his fate, he wipes away a lone tear and then vanishes.

### Evan LaMorte

**Bussengeist, Neutral Good**

<b>Armor Class</b>	N/A	<b>Str</b>	N/A
<b>Movement</b>	9	<b>Dex</b>	N/A
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	N/A	<b>Con</b>	N/A
<b>Hit Points</b>	N/A	<b>Int</b>	13
<b>THAC0</b>	Special	<b>Wis</b>	14
<b>Morale</b>	20	<b>Cha</b>	15
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	N/A	<b>XP</b>	0
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	N/A		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Focused Despair		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	See below		
<b>Magic Resistance</b>	See below		

### Background

Evan was born and raised in the domain of Falkovnia. Almost since the moment he was born, his parents had planned to have him become a member of the army, as they were a poor family, and it was known that the military was exempt from taxes. He grew up just like any other Falkovnian boy, with dreams to someday join the Talons, Drakov's elite group of warriors. At age 18, at the urging of his parents and friends, Evan enlisted into the Falkovnian army. He rose quickly in its ranks, and at age 25, he was asked by Drakov to join the Talons. Overjoyed that Drakov would personally ask him, Evan gladly accepted. However, his joy soon came to an end.

While working inside Drakov's castle as security, Evan began to learn of the true horrors of his lord. He quickly learned of Drakov's short temper, and of his obsession with watching prisoners be impaled as he ate dinner. "At least," Evan thought, "I'm not the one responsible for seeing to the deaths of these men." That, however, quickly changed.

At age 26, Evan was transferred to prison work, and was in charge of selecting the prisoners to be staked for Drakov's amusement. At first, Evan was disgusted by this, but did it anyway, knowing he would be the one staked if no one was presented. As time went on, Evan became accustomed to his work, and eventually began to enjoy the spectacle of watching a prisoner slowly descend down a pike. He would even talk to them and mock them as they died. It became one of his favorite pastimes.

One night, however, one of the prisoners managed to slip a poison into Evan's meal which caused him to sleep. When Drakov was not presented with a staked prisoner, he became very, very angry. He personally descended into the dungeons to see what had happened.

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When he saw Evan asleep at his post, he became outraged. He beat the young soldier into consciousness, and told him that as punishment, he would be staked in place of a prisoner. As the guards led Evan to the execution site, Evan recalled the numerous times he himself had done this to other prisoners. He then recalled his feelings about executions, his feelings before life in Drakov's dungeons had changed him. He pleaded for mercy to whatever gods would hear him, for he truly felt sorry for what he had done. The execution proceeded as normal.

Evan felt excruciating pain as the pike dug into his body, but he did not scream. He said nothing as he descended down the pike, slowly dying. A lone tear dropped from his eye, down his cheek. He closed his eyes, asked for forgiveness, and died.

A week later, the first reported sighting occurred. As Drakov's guests ate dinner and viewed the executions, a young soldier looked around the table and noticed a member of the Talons. As he gazed at this man, the young soldier found himself becoming depressed. As he continued to stare, he noticed the man wipe away a lone tear from his cheek. Suddenly, feelings of sorrow and pity for the prisoner being executed overwhelmed the soldier. He ended up leaving the dinner before it ended, sobbing hysterically.

## Personality

Due to the nature of bussengeists, Evan is always depressed. However, there is more to him than depression. Evan truly feels guilty for what he did to those prisoners under his charge. He is further tortured by the fact that he must witness these executions every night, and not be able to stop them. He seeks to convince other soldiers of the wrong in the executions, but his attempts usually result in causing more suffering and despair to those who gaze upon him. Evan would give anything to be able to tell one person how he feels, and convince them to help the prisoners.

## Combat

Evan is a bussengeist, and therefore, cannot engage in physical combat. However, he is capable of an "attack." Evan has been granted the ability to focus his feelings of despair, depression, and guilt upon others. Upon his wiping away the lone tear, anyone looking directly at Evan becomes overwhelmed with feelings of guilt, depression, and pity. Characters suffering from this attack must make a save against Paralyzation or begin to sob hysterically, causing them to suffer a -4 penalty to all attack and damage rolls, saving throws, and proficiency

checks. Victims of this attack must also make a Wisdom check. If it fails, they also become overwhelmed with Evan's memories and are knocked unconscious.

Evan can not be harmed by physical weapons, nor can he be turned by a cleric. The a wizard or cleric casting *control undead*, *holy word*, *limited wish*, *dismissal*, and *forbiddance* can temporarily drive Evan away for 2d6 hours. However, Evan will thereafter be immune to that specific spell if cast by that specific caster. Nothing short of a *wish* or *dispel evil* can truly end Evan's haunting.

## Adventure Ideas

- ◆ Evan's tale could be used to reveal Drakov's evil to a naïve group of PCs. The knowledge gained from his attack could reveal to them all the evidence necessary to convince the PCs that Drakov is beyond redemption.
- ◆ If the PCs are ever captured by Drakov, Evan could provide a chance for freedom. His hauntings have caused Drakov to become distracted during the executions, robbing him from his pleasure. Drakov could provide the PCs with freedom if they get rid of Evan. This could cause a moral dilemma for them if they learn what Evan is really after.

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## DUNKEL KRALLE

By John W. Mangrum

Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth ~

*Matthew 6:3*

### Biography

When the Requiem unleashed a wave of negative energy across Darkon, its corruption wiped out every living soul in the city of Il Aluk, animating them as the accursed undead. Even after that disastrous night, the curtain of death hanging over the doomed city had unusual repercussions...

### Appearance

Before his brush with the zone of death surrounding Il Aluk, Dunkel Kralle was a capable member of the Corvian militia, and had the solid, muscular build to prove it. After the negative energy coursed through his body, the dwarf's health has declines precipitously. He is now withered and frail, his skin pale and clammy, his beard unkempt. He plainly appears, and in fact is, seriously ill.

To add to Kralle's woes, his left arm ends in a scarred stump; the hand has been amputated. His missing hand, if seen, is nearly black with rot and carries the stench of wet leather.

### Dunkel Kralle

**Crawling Claw, Chaotic Evil**

**3<sup>rd</sup>-level Dwarf Fighter, Chaotic Neutral**

<b>Armor Class</b>	7 / 10*	<b>Str</b>	18 / 8
<b>Movement</b>	9 / 6	<b>Dex</b>	16 / 10
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	5 / 3	<b>Con</b>	— / 8
<b>Hit Points</b>	15 / 20	<b>Int</b>	? / 10
<b>THAC0</b>	16 / 18	<b>Wis</b>	? / 9
<b>Morale</b>	19 / 12	<b>Chr</b>	— / 8
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	1	<b>XP</b>	420
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	1d4 or 1d6; see below		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Surprise, Strangulation		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	See below		
<b>Special Vulnerabilities</b>	Cold-based spells		
<b>Magic Resistance</b>	Nil		

\* Scores before the slash represent the Hand. Those after represent Dunkel.

### Background

In the days which followed the catastrophic conclusion of the Grim Harvest, the other cities of Necropolis realized that all trade with Il Aluk has suddenly stopped. Fearing the worst, they sent out parties to investigate the source of the wave of fearsome energy, which had seemed to come directly from the heart of that great city. One such group of militiamen was sent out from Corvia, under the command of Sergeant Dunkel Kralle.

When his group neared the doomed city, they came upon an eerie sight; a clear border between life and death. Outside this border, the winter-thinned grass struggled to keep its grasp on life; all the grass within the border was brown and dead, presumably killed by the blast which has been felt by everyone in Darkon. Yet, visible in the distance, they could see the buildings of Il Aluk. Not only were they still intact, but trails of chimney smoke could be seen, and they occasionally even caught a glimpse of movement. Clearly, the city still held life.

Kralle's group fearfully discussed this phenomenon among themselves, trying to deduce its nature. After a few hours of investigation, they determined that the clearly-marked border of death extended all the way around the city; if they were to reach Il Aluk, they would have to brave the border. Ill-versed in matters sorcerous, they guessed that, perhaps, the city had been surrounded by some sort of invisible barrier, explaining why no one was leaving.

Kralle tested this theory, fetching a dead branch and using it to tentatively probe the unseen barrier. He found no resistance. His men were increasingly unnerved, but agreed that they could not return to Corvia without answers.

Perhaps out of frustration, one of Kralle's men, Drangen by name, shrugged his shoulders and declared that someone would just have to brave the border themselves. As this impatient guardsman strode forward, Kralle skin tightened. Overcome by a wave of dread, he rushed forward to stop the man from continuing. Kralle

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reached Drangen just as the latter stepped across the border. Kralle clamped his hand on the man's shoulder just as Drangen suddenly stiffened in pain, instantly dropping dead.

In that moment, Kralle's left hand entered the field of death. His hand erupted in searing pain, and a wretched cold surged through his body, threatening to freeze the very blood in his veins. Crying out in agony, he fell back, away from the barrier, even as his dead companion fell forward deeper into it.

The rest of Kralle's men rushed forward to their fallen leader; fortunately they were wise enough not to run to Drangen's side. They found Kralle still alive, but wracked with chills, his body weakened from its momentary encounter with the shroud of negative energy hanging over Il Aluk. Even more worrisome, his left hand has been paralyzed, numb and unresponsive.

Unbelievably, as they tended to Kralle, Drangen, though apparently slain, slowly rose to his feet again. For the moment, the guardsmen were overjoyed; but then they realized Drangen was not himself. As they called out to their friend in increasing desperation, Drangen slowly slogged off into the city, never even bothering to turn and give his allies a moment's glance.

With that, the group decided they'd had more than enough of Il Aluk, and retreated from the border of death, helping their ailing sergeant stay on his feet.

Sadly, this was just the beginning of Kralle's woes.

Within the hour, his numbed hand began to twitch and flex of its own accord. Soon after, the pain set in. At first, the hand seemed to be suffering from normal, albeit painful muscle cramps, but by the time Kralle's group returned to Corvia the pain had become nearly unbearable, spreading throughout the affected hand. The pain was sharpest near the wrist, at the line between Dunkel's normal flesh and the hand's clammy, senseless skin.

Over the next few weeks, the situation continued to deteriorate. Kralle's stamina had been permanently damaged by the pall of death, and his health—but physical and mental—began to fade. Dunkel developed a deepening fear of his affected hand, as well he should have, for the hand seemed to obey its own, malign intelligence. After the morning Dunkel was found half-dead, nearly choked to death by his own left hand, the offending limb had to be securely strapped to his headboard while he slept.

Even as the hand's freakish intelligence seemed to grow, its flesh decomposed. It started slowly, with discolored patches of bruised skin, but progressed to greenish-black blotches, and started spreading up Dunkel's forearm. When the hand started to reek of rotten meat, the chiurgeon was called for, despite Dunkel's urgent, desperate pleas against it. The

chiurgeon immediately declared Kralle's hand to be gangrenous, and pronounced that it must be amputated at once. Kralle went into a panic, pitifully pleading for them not to remove his hand. Obviously in a feverish delirium, Kralle insisted that, so long as the hand was anchored at the end of his arm, he could keep it under control. The healer ignored his ranting, calmly warning Kralle that, if the hand was not removed, it would surely drag him into the grave with it.

After the hand was amputated, Kralle made just one, feeble request before he passed out.

"Bury it deep."

After the amputation, and after the hand had been buried in a small, unmarked grave, Kralle began to recover somewhat. With the noisome flesh gone, he no longer suffered with unending pain, but his overall health did not much improve. It was though the unseen shroud hanging over Il Aluk had literally drained the life from him.

And put it in the Hand. Not long after its burial, the Hand—granted the mockery of life by the negative energy which has flooded its veins—started to slowly crawl its way free of the grave...

## Personality

Dunkel Kralle, his health shattered by the negative energy, is a mere shadow of the man he once was. These days, he usually just huddles under a thick blanket, trying to stay warm, and trying not to think about his missing hand.

The Hand is somewhat more active. It possesses some of Dunkel's memories, a remnant of his life-force as it flowed through the hand and out of his body at Il Aluk. It too feels the pain of separation, and wants nothing else but to rejoin Dunkel, and lead him into a new life in the grip of Death. Towards this goal, it is utterly ruthless, killing anyone who stands between it and Kralle.

Of course, since the Hand has no means to communicate, understanding its thoughts may be next to impossible.

## Combat

Despite its small size, the Hand is a challenging opponent. The negative energy which animates it has also enhanced its agility and strength; the Hand can leap up to 15' to make or avoid an attack.

When the Hand does attack its victims, it does so in one of two ways. If the victim is unarmored, or wearing armor no heavier than leather, the Hand clamps down on the victim, inflicting 1d6 points of damage with its

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crushing grip. Against more heavily armored foes, the Hand strikes with a powerful blow, causing 1d4 points of damage. If the Hand makes a successful attack with a natural 18 or better on its attack roll, it gets a firm grip around its victim's throat and begins to strangle its foes. This strangulation automatically causes 1d6 points of damage each round until the victim is dead or the Hand otherwise lets go. A victim can only escape this death grip by making a successful Bend Bars roll. An ally can try to free the victim as well, but due to the Hand's small size, no more than one character can try to wrench the Hand loose in any given round.

Edged weapons only inflict half damage in the Hand's shriveled, leathery flesh, and as an undead creature, the Hand is immune to *charm*, *sleep*, *hold*, or death magic. It is also unaffected by raise dead, turning, or holy water. Cold-based spells make the Hand brittle, causing all damage rolls inflicted on it to be increased by one point per die for 1d6 rounds.

Although such magic is well beyond the limits of heroes likely to encounter the Hand, a *resurrection* spell renders the Hand immobile for a number of turns equal to the level of the caster.

## NEAR AT HAND

This introductory adventure is designed for four to six heroes of levels 1-3. The adventure can take place anytime the heroes are traveling across Necropolis, and staying in a roadside inn. Since this adventure emphasizes mystery over combat, it is recommended that the Dungeon Master offer an appropriate XP bonus for roleplaying during these events.

## Background

Months have passed since Dunkel Kralle's necrotic hand was amputated, but his health still has not returned. Still concerned for their ally, two of Dunkel's friends (and fellow members of the Corvia militia) have decided to take him to the mudbaths in Nevuchar Springs, famed for their therapeutic value. Their hope is that this treatment will put Dunkel back on the road to physical and spiritual health.

In this time, the Hand has crawled from its unmarked grave, and is slowly closing in on its former owner. Thus, this adventure can take place virtually anywhere in central or eastern Necropolis, as the dwarven guardsmen travel from Corvia into the Mistlands. On the night the heroes cross paths with these travelers, the Hand catches up as well.

## The Adventure Begins

The adventure begins one stormy night, in a roadside inn known as the *Horseman's Rest*. The innkeeper is Pugh Horas, a middle-aged, balding man who runs the inn with his widowed mother, Mabli. While Pugh tends to the customers, his ancient mother sits near the warm hearth, knitting.

The *Horseman's Rest* is a large, fairly typical rural inn, with a spacious common room, comfortable guest rooms on the second floor, and an attached stable outside. Every guest room has its own small fireplace, and the door can be barred from the inside. The Horas' quarters are on the first floor, off the kitchen.

Perhaps due to the stormy weather, not many people seem to be traveling tonight. Other than the heroes, the only other guests are a group of three dwarves, two of whom are obviously militia of some sort. This trio consists of Kralle and the two Corvian guardsmen taking him to Nevuchar Springs, Eisen and Stahl. Eisen has numerous braids woven into his beard, while Stahl can be distinguished by his gray mustache, and the heavy crossbow he keeps slung on his back. In his weakened state, Dunkel stands out the strongest against his companions, shivering and wrapped in thick blankets. He acts nervous and frail, and looks like he was just fished out of a lake.

The dwarven guardsmen aren't interested in chatting with strangers; if the heroes persist, Stahl will calmly but sternly insist that their friend is quite ill, and shouldn't be disturbed. Under all his blankets, Dunkel's amputated limb is not readily apparent.

About an hour after sunset, Pugh bars the front door, a guard against unwanted night visitors. The heroes can leave the inn if they want, but Pugh warns them we will not let them in again until daybreak. The evening should pass quietly, with Dunkel's companions helping him up to his room after their meal. After the heroes retire to their rooms for the evening, continue with the next scene.

**Eisen, dm F2:** AC 7 (studded leather); MV 6; hp 19; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (battle axe); SZ M (4'); ML steady (12); AL LN.

S 13 D 9 C 16 I 11 W 13 C 10

*Personality:* obedient, quiet

**Stahl, dm F3:** AC 7 (ring mail); MV 6; hp 29; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 or 1d8 (heavy crossbow or battle axe); SZ M (4'3"); ML elite (14); AL LN.

S 15 D 13 C 17 I 11 W 9 C 8

*Personality:* stern, brusque



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## The Late Arrival

In the wee hours of the night, well after all the guests have turned in, Pugh is awakened by the sound of breaking glass in the nearby common room. This noise is too quiet to be heard in the upstairs rooms, but if one of the heroes is on watch in the upstairs hall, they can hear the sound with a successful Intelligence check.

Pugh goes to investigate, and finds a small pane of glass in the inn's front window smashed, as if someone outside had tossed in a stone.

He's still pondering whether to wake the Corvian guards and ask them to look into this when the Hand attacks. Springing at him from the shadows under a nearby table, the Hand clamps down on his throat. The Hand's iron grip keeps Pugh from screaming, but his brief, flailing attempts to tear the murderous creature from his throat create enough of a crashing noise to wake the whole inn.

If a hero was on watch upstairs, they arrive just as Pugh collapses, dead. Otherwise, the heroes arrive at the same time as Eisen and Stahl, just moments after Pugh has choked out his last breath. Unnoticed in the darkness, the spidery Hand skitters away, slipping into the kitchen when Mabli comes in to investigate.

Upon finding her son dead, Mabli shrieks in horror; if the heroes do not take a few minutes to try to calm her down, Eisen will. Meanwhile, Stahl's suspicion falls upon the heroes.

A quick examination of the room reveals two clues; the doors are still barred from the inside; unless the killer was capable of leaving through the rat-sized hole in the front window, he's still in the building—and has probably been here all night.

Second, the killer strangled Pugh with such force that angry red bruises are already forming on his crushed throat. In fact, with a successful Intelligence check, heroes can tell that the bruises are in the shape of a left hand.

If the heroes turn their suspicions towards Dunkel, or otherwise decide to examine everyone, perhaps trying to learn if anyone present could be the responsible party, Eisen and Stahl will resist the idea that their friend should be disturbed. If the heroes press on the subject, the dwarves will begrudgingly allow them to see Kralle. Kralle, still dangerously ill, remains in bed in his room. As soon as the guardsmen accompany the heroes to Dunkel's room, they'll tell their ailing ally to show the snooping heroes his left hand. With some hesitation, Dunkel does so, revealing that his maimed left limb ends in a scarred stump below the elbow!

Satisfied that this clears Dunkel from suspicion, Stahl insists that the heroes now leave his companion in

peace. If the heroes linger for even a moment, Dunkel locks feverish eyes with one of the heroes and, with a desperate strain in his voice, hisses, "I told them... I *told* them!" With that, Stahl loses his meager patience and forcibly issues the heroes out of the room.

Although the dwarves have no legal power outside Corvia, Stahl warns the heroes that they are suspects in this crime, and that they are not to leave the inn. At daybreak, one of the guardsmen will hurry to the nearest town and summon aid—until then, he recommends everyone lock themselves in their rooms. Mabli does just that, and the guardsmen start taking shifts; while one patrols the inn, the other stays in Dunkel's room to keep a protective eye on him.

If the heroes also want to keep a watch, the dwarves don't stand in their way. All the same, Stahl's attitude makes it obvious that he considers the heroes prime suspects.

## Like Looking for a Needle

About an hour after everything settles down again, the inn is shaken by Mabli's piercing screech. Eisen and Stahl immediately bolt for her quarters, in such a hurry that Stahl leaves his crossbow behind in Dunkel's room. However, longer-legged heroes should easily be able to be the first one's at Mabli's door.

Mabli has locked her door from the inside, but a simple Open Doors roll can force it open. Read the following to the first hero through the door:

You find the innkeeper's wizened mother sprawled at the side of her bed, tangled up in the sheets. Nearby, her knitting materials have been scattered across the floor. She clutches a quivering hand to her heart, and is white with fear.

"The spider," she whispers. "The spider..."

Mabli has nearly been frightened to death, so it will take considerable comfort on the part of the heroes to calm her down enough to talk. If they do settle her down, all she can tell them is that she was woken by the feeling of *something* creeping up the length her body. In the darkness, she saw a "horrible black spider" crawling up the sheets, and when it suddenly leapt at her face... that's the last thing she remembers.

In the darkness and through her terror, Mabli's account is a bit confused. Her "spider" was of course the Hand, which scuttled in here after killing Pugh. Also, it wasn't lunging at her, but rather at her knitting materials.

As soon as Stahl realizes Mabli is still alive, he orders Eisen to keep an eye on her, and he goes back upstairs to keep watch over Dunkel.

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If the heroes examine Mabli's scattered knitting gear, they discover that one of her two long knitting needles is missing. Soon after this discovery, they make another:

The face of the dwarven guardsman, Eisen, clouds over in confusion as he points toward the cold hearth.

"What... *is* that?"

Looking where he's pointing, you immediately see that he's simply pointing at a small ball of yarn lying near the fireplace.

But wait—the ball twitches a bit. And again. Suddenly, you realize that it's being tugged at, slowly being unraveled. Your eyes following the coarse thread, you discover that, in erratic jerks, *something* is slowly unspooling the yarn into the fireplace... and up a flue surely no wider than your arm!

If a hero grabs onto the yarn, something strong tugs at the far end for just an instant before the thread snaps and goes slack in the hero's hands.

Eisen starts to slip into stammering shock, muttering, "No... it can't be... Stahl said it was impossible..." If the heroes press the frightened dwarf, he'll finally blurt out all of Dunkel Kralle's demented claims that his amputated hand was coming to find him. With increasing terror in his voice, Eisen can give provide all of the information in Dunkel's background section. As soon as he wraps up with the revelation that Dunkel's hand must still be "alive," a loud crash can be heard from upstairs. With successful Intelligence checks -2, heroes may even be able to hear the sound of Stahl's crossbow firing in the instant before the crash. When the heroes run upstairs to investigate, continue with the next scene.

## The Sound of One Hand Clapping

As soon as the first of the heroes comes in sight of the door to Dunkel's room, read or paraphrase the following:

As you rush upstairs, you discover the door to Kralle's room is slightly ajar. Before you can close the distance, however, a bloody left hand juts out of the gap. The hand clutches onto the door, pulling it farther open, and the owner of the hand, the guardsman Stahl, staggers out into the hall. His face and neck are wet and crimson, and as he twists to look at you with drowning eyes, you see why: a crossbow bolt, apparently fired from directly below him, just out of his neck, having been driven deeply into his jaw.

Stahl makes one feeble attempt to gurgle something out, and collapses lifeless on the floor.

The Dungeon Master should call for horror checks on the part of the heroes, then continue with the following.

Moments after Stahl crumples to the floorboard, Dunkel Kralle appears in the doorway, his face a mask of fear and madness, Stahl's battle axe in hand.

"I *told* them," he screams at you, before slamming the door shut. In the next moment, you hear a bar being slid into place.

The heroes can break into the room with a successful Open Doors rolls (vs. a barred door), or by inflicting 20 points of damage to the door. The entire time the heroes spend breaking in, they can hear Dunkel inside, continuing to shriek "I told them!" again and again. When the heroes do finally break in, read the following:

You burst into the room, instantly spotting Dunkel perched on the edge of his bed, his back to you.

"I *told* them," he shrieks one more time, turning to face you. "I warned them, but would they listen? No!"

As he turns, you see his maimed limb. What previously ended in a scarred stump now ends in a shriveled, blackened hand that writhes and twitches like some horrid insect. With his good hand, Dunkel feverishly works a knitting needle, using it and a length of the heavy course thread to anchor the monstrous Hand to his ruined wrist.

"I *told* them to bury it *deep!*"

## Conclusion

Dunkel, finally driven completely mad by his prodigal limb, makes a desperate attempt to fight his way past the heroes and out into the night. Dunkel wields Stahl's battle axe in his right hand, while the Hand can make separate attacks. The Hand's only limitation, now that it has been refastened to Kralle's arm, is that it can no longer leap at its victims. Damage done to Kralle does not affect the hand, and vice versa.

Working together, the heroes should be able to stop Dunkel, and may even try to keep him alive in the process. If the Hand is destroyed, Eisen will try to complete the journey to Nevuchar Spring with him. Sadly, Dunkel is now so lost in his madness that he must be restrained; Maykle might be a more fitting destination.

If the Hand is not removed from Dunkel's wrist, the negative energy flowing through it finally overcomes the last of Kralle's strength, and he dies before dawn.

## Recurrence

If Dunkel is killed while the Hand is still attached to his wrist, or if the Hand is not otherwise removed by dawn, Dunkel Kralle will not lie easy in his grave. Thanks to negative energy seeping from the Hand into his body, he will rise again after three nights as a half-strength wight. Eventually, this new wight will feel drawn towards the dead city of Il Aluk, but perhaps not before hunting down the heroes who hastened his journey to the grave...

# BARTON DEFORET

by Stuart Turner

She longs to fold to her maternal breast  
 Part of herself, yet to herself unknown;  
 To see and to salute the stranger guest,  
 Fed with her life through many a tedious moon.

**Anna Lætitia Barbault**

*To A Little Invisible Being Who Is Expected Soon To Become Visible (1825)*

## Biography

Many ghosts are a result of their own dark desires, the need for justice or an obligation to warn others of danger. A few, however, are held from true death by the love of one of the living.

## Appearance

When visible, Barton is a translucent baby boy, perhaps a few months old. He has a smiling chubby face, which conveys an air of complete innocence. Large brown eyes and wisps of black hair only add to the angelic appearance of the boy.

He wears only a white nappy, and bears no injury or sign of his death. Except for his ethereal form, he is every bit an adorable young child.

## Background

Barton was the first child of Alistair and Annita DeForet, a quiet couple earning their living on a farm in the south of Richemulot. For Annita, who had not adapted well from her hectic city life in Pont-a-Museau to the quiet and isolated existence of a farmer's wife, Barton's birth was a dream come true. She doted over his every giggle and gurgle, and Alistair was overjoyed to see his wife so happy.

Tragedy struck only 3 months after his birth, however. As the unusually harsh winter set in, many animals descended from the surrounding hills of Verbrek, desperately looking for food in the warmer lowlands around the Musarde River. On one of the few clear days that season, the DeForet family ventured outside to enjoy the sun, Barton getting pushed around

## Barton DeForet

### Second-Magnitude Ghost, Neutral

<b>Armor Class</b>	0	<b>Str</b>	—
<b>Movement</b>	6	<b>Dex</b>	—
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	4	<b>Con</b>	—
<b>Hit Points</b>	13	<b>Int</b>	4
<b>THAC0</b>	17	<b>Wis</b>	3
<b>Morale</b>	13	<b>Chr</b>	14
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	1	<b>XP</b>	x
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	1d6		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Telekinesis		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	Insubstantiality (incorporeal), Invisibility, Rejuvenation, Immune to life-affecting magic, +1/0 or better magical weapons needed to hit.		

### Magic Resistance

Nil

on a small sled by Annita while Alistair chopped some firewood.

Annita was only distracted for a few moments after Alistair cried out, having tripped over while carrying wood back to the house—but it was long enough for the starving wolf cub to act. Barton's happy gurgle turned to a scream as the animal began to drag him away, and was soon joined by Annita's cry of distress, which frightened the beast away from the child.

It was another month before the frozen ground yielded enough to allow Barton to be buried, not far from the DeForet house. Annita did not handle the situation well, descending into a depressed state that concerned Alistair greatly. She had wanted nothing else more than to have her child back, and in the month following Barton's death her mind focused on nothing else. Just

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before the funeral, Annita opened her son's coffin, and removed the small wooden rattle that had been his most cherished toy. Comforted by its presence, yet afraid of what Alistair might think, she hid it at the back of her dresser drawer.

Alistair was pleased to see his wife's condition improve slightly after the funeral. He was even happier when, not three months after Barton's funeral, Annita discovered she was pregnant again!

He would have been less pleased had he known the true nature of his wife's pregnancy. Annita had wanted nothing other than to be with her son again, and unfortunately some force, somewhere, had decided to grant her wish. Her second pregnancy was nothing but a phantom of her first one. Though she could feel the kicking of her child, and her belly swelled, she was carrying nothing more than her own memories and desires.

When eventually she entered labor, on what would have been Barton's first birthday, nothing came from her womb but fluid. But Annita was expecting more, and got it—Barton had entered her life once again, but this time as an insubstantial copy of the original child.

## Personality

As Barton is only a baby, he has little in the way of identifiable personality. He knows nothing of good and evil, or life and death, or indeed of his current state. He cannot communicate in any way apart from the basic emotions of joy and sadness.

He is a playful child, however. Like any baby, he wants to touch and play with almost everything he sees. Now, with his telekinetic powers, he has a much greater ability to "play" with things, and can easily create havoc through his innocent curiosity.

Barton's presence is usually accompanied by the sound of his wooden rattle, which is one of the two items that holds the child to this world. This other is Annita, his mother.

## Combat

While Barton will never make a deliberate attack on any individual, his abilities can generate hazardous situations for those around him. Barton can Perform Telekinesis on objects of up to 20 pounds within 40 yards of himself. Objects can either be moved slowly, or thrown in a single burst of energy. Damage from such objects can vary, and should be determined by the DM, but should not exceed 1d4 points.

Though Barton is not malicious at all, his child's mind and lack of dexterity can have some nasty implications for those he chooses to play with. A rapier

might begin wavering dangerously in the air, a pot of boiling water might be pulled from the stove, or a child's toy block may become a speedy projectile.

This child also poses a special danger to his mother, Annita. Her wish to be with her son may be fulfilled with her death, for she loses 1 point of Con each time she contacts the baby-ghost. While this rarely has a noticeable immediate affect upon being touched, she will become weak and listless if she continues to lose her Constitution. Note that this only occurs to Annita.

Barton can only be damaged by weapons of +1 or greater enchantment. However, there are other events that will give Barton's spirit true death. The first is the destruction of the rattle that was his only possession in life, or its burial in his coffin. The second is Annita's death, since it was her will that brought him back.

## REBIRTH

This adventure is designed for any number of PCs of levels 1-2. It assumes that the heroes have little or no access to magical weapons, or damage-dealing magical spells. It revolves around the arrival of the PCs at the DeForet farm just before the birth of the ghost-baby Barton, and the struggle to save the family from itself as the first winter storms rage outside. While this adventure's notional setting is Richemulot, virtually any location in the Core would be appropriate for this adventure.

## Background

The background for this adventure is largely as described in Barton's own background above. It is exactly one year since the birth of Barton, and Annita DeForet is moments away from giving birth to his phantom replacement.

## The Adventure Begins

Ideally, this adventure should take place at the beginning of the winter months, just as the first snowfall is arriving. It begins as the player characters are traveling between towns (probably to Ste. Ronges or Mortigny), when the weather starts to become fierce. Snow begins to fall, the wind picks up, and the characters soon find themselves (or their horses) walking through shin-deep drifts along the road.

Soon after, the characters will come across a farmhouse at the side of the road, along with a small barn and several sheds. The heroes may consider asking at the house for shelter, given the weather conditions, but

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

even if they don't, Alistair will approach them to ask for help:

Through the heavy snow, you see someone emerging from the front door of the farmhouse. The figure wades towards you, and you can just hear his cries before the wind carries them away—"Is there a doctor among you? Can any of you help my wife?"

Heroes with any medical skill will presumably offer to help Alistair, and even if the party has no healing skills among them they will probably be willing to see if they can be of assistance.

**Alistair, 0-level hm:** AC 10, MV 12, HD ½; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AR 1; Dmg by weapon; SZ M; ML steady (12); AL LG; XP 0.

S 15, D 12, C 16, I 10, W 9, Ch 12.

*Personality:* stern, unemotional.

When the players enter the house, they soon hear the occasional yell or grunt coming from the main bedroom. Alistair quickly explains that his wife has gone into labor. A midwife has been sent for, but she hasn't arrived (most likely due to the snowstorm). If one PC is qualified to deal with the situation (due to a healing non-weapon proficiency or similar), then Alistair will take the individual alone into the main bedroom to see Annita, leaving the others to their own devices in the small living room of the house. If no character has skills that qualify them to be a midwife, then Alistair will ask any female member of the group to help. Failing that, he will allow anyone offering assistance to come into the main bedroom. Alistair will not, however, allow the entire group of characters in to watch the birth—the birth of his child is not to be a spectator sport!

## Birth

The player(s) that assist Annita with the birth should be taken aside and read the following, adjusting as appropriate:

This birth is longer and more painful than any you've witnessed before. The increasing howls of the wind outside the window are only matched by the yells of pain from Annita, and you begin to worry when, after hours of effort, there is still no sign of the child at all.

Allow the hero to ponder on alternatives for a short while at this point. However, there is likely to be little that the character can do in this situation, though a character with the Herbalism non-weapon proficiency

may be able to dull Annita's pain somewhat. Once the hero has had a chance to consider their options, read the following:

Annita's face contorts in concentration again, and a wail begins to erupt from her lips as a torrent of fluid flows from her. You can sense relief in Annita's voice even as her yell begins to ebb, and Alistair moves hopefully towards the end of the bed. Yet still there is no child.

Annita is completely exhausted, and immediately fall into a deep slumber. Alistair immediately takes any heroes present aside, and suggests that they tell his wife that her child was stillborn, to protect from knowing what has just happened. Alistair is visibly shaken by this event, his previous stoic attitude lost to confusion and dismay. If questioned about the occurrence, Alistair reveals little about the events of the past year. He is somewhat ashamed of these happenings, as he feels that it reflects poorly on his role of protector of his family.

## The House

Players not in the room where the birth is occurring are free to do as they please in the DeForet's house. The house is left to be detailed by the Dungeon Master, though the farmhouses in *Feast of Goblins* (Jackques' and Ontash's homes) would be particularly appropriate if you have access to this product.

The possessions of the DeForets are simple, and are unlikely to arouse much interest in the player characters. The only notable items are an easel and canvas in one corner of the room (Annita is an amateur artist), and the blazing fireplace at which the heroes will be eager to warm their extremities. Significantly, there is no evidence in the living area that Annita and Alistair have any children at all. If the characters choose to wander the house, they will find a nursery, but there is little indication that any child had used this room previously.

At some point while they wait for the birthing, one of the heroes should notice something moving out in the snow. While they only catch a glimpse through the blizzard, it is certainly some form of animal—and quite large too.

This is one of four wolves that have been attracted to the house by Barton's reappearance. One of them is, in fact, the wolf that killed the original baby nine months ago. The wolves do not present any immediate threat to the characters, as they will not attempt to enter the house or attack any human that ventures out into the snow. They simply serve to provide something for the characters to worry about, and potentially to provide a hint as to the truth about what happened to baby Barton.

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

Ideally, the heroes that waited outside the bedroom during the birth should not be told about the strange events that occurred therein. In fact, Alistair is likely to ask any PC present at the birth not to mention it, fearing that Annita may overhear and discover the truth.

By the time Alistair emerges from the bedroom, he has regained the composure and is maintaining a façade of strength and stability. To heroes that didn't see Alistair during the birth, he may even come across as uncaring and callous, but the truth is that he wishes to appear strong for Annita's benefit.

As it is now well and truly dark, the heroes will be offered a room for the night, modest though it is. Annita will not emerge from the room, and Alistair has little to say, choosing to stay in the bedroom and be with his sleeping wife.

## Arrival

During the night, Alistair will come and rouse one of the heroes—preferably the one who helped with the birth. Sounding nervous, he will suggest that there is something they should see. If pressed, he will say that something appears to be wrong with Annita. When the character is ushered into the main bedroom, read the following text:

Annita sits in the corner of the room, next to a small side-table on which a candle flickers. Her arms are positioned strangely across her chest—as if cradling a child! Her head lifts to acknowledge your presence, a large smile on her face.

“Isn't he beautiful?” she asks. But you are distracted from her joyous face by the dark red stain appearing on her white blouse and spreading down towards her waist.

The blood is just a physical manifestation of the damage that is being done to Annita by Barton. She feels no pain from the wound, and rationalizes the wound as simply a scratch from Barton while he was being fed. She will not be convinced that Barton is not actually there, ordering player characters out of her room if they try to insist that the baby isn't alive.

## The Haunting

The remainder of this adventure is very loosely organized, as it is impossible to predict the actions of the heroes in the DeForet household. The remainder of the adventure could take place entirely in the morning after the birth, or over the following couple of days, depending on the determination of the player characters. Regardless of how long it takes, however, the snowstorm should continue for the duration of the haunting.

Three things are needed by the Dungeon Master to run this part of the scenario: clues as to the truth about the original child Barton, possible encounters with the baby-ghost, and ways of ending the haunting of Annita DeForet.

**Clues:** Around the house there are a number of hints that this is not the first child to be born in this house, despite what Alistair and Annita say:

- ◆ There is a small painting stored in the attic of Barton in his cot. It is dated about eleven months ago (when Barton was one month old).
- ◆ Some of the supposedly new clothes in the nursery have slight grass stains, suggesting that they have been worn before.
- ◆ Annita may, in her poor mental condition, let some hints slip by saying things like “He's just like he was before,” or murmuring to herself that “I'm so glad you came back.”
- ◆ Barton's rattle, which Annita removed from his coffin, is at the back of Annita's bedside drawer.

If confronted with a significant piece of evidence, Alistair will give in and tell the heroes of their first child and the tragedy that befell him. Annita, however, now refuses to admit that any such event occurred, believing that the ghostly Barton is the same child she bore a year ago (which, in some respects, he is).

**Encounters:** Barton's presence always brings with it the sound of his wooden rattle, and the Dungeon Master may wish to use a prop in the game to reflect this. By keeping a rattle (or, if you don't have access to one, a small bottle containing beads or small stones) under the gaming table, Barton's imminent presence can be signified by a soft shaking of the toy. This is far more effective than actually saying that the rattle can be heard. Watch the effect on the group when they hear the rattle during a loud conversation!

Barton is always visible to Annita, but rarely becomes visible to others.

His location will probably not be of particular interest to the heroes, however, as it is unlikely that they will have the magical weapons required to damage the ghost. Instead, they will have to search for other solutions to the situation (as listed below).

It should be remembered that Barton is not a malevolent ghost. None of his actions will deliberately aim to harm any of the heroes, unless they become aggressive towards Annita. If this happens, Barton will effectively carry out Annita's desire, which may involve direct injury to the heroes. Barton will never actually be aware of the consequence of such actions, however, and

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

so will maintain his jolly, cheerful expression when carrying out these actions.

Even given this, there are plenty of opportunities for encounters with, or related to, the baby-ghost:

- ◆ If a meal is being cooked in the kitchen, Barton will playfully pull one of the pots from the stove, potentially splashing scalding water around.
- ◆ The players may notice that the painting on the easel in the living room has been smeared with blue, as if by a small hand. Later, in the nursery, a small, blue handprint can be noticed on the side of the cot.
- ◆ At some point, Annita will see Barton outside, and attempt to run into the storm to bring him back inside. Heroes remembering the wolves pacing around outside may be concerned for Annita's safety and attempt to bring her inside, in which case she may become violent (although she has no means by which to seriously injure the heroes). The wolves will not actually be a real threat in this situation, though they will pace around any people outside the house at a distance.
- ◆ If any of the characters carry a loaded smokepowder weapon, Barton may pull the trigger with his telekinetic ability.
- ◆ Heroes investigating Barton's possessions in the nursery too closely may find themselves the target of numerous small hand-carved wooden blocks being thrown around the room. These are a set of blocks made for him by Alistair. Each block can only inflict 1 point of damage.
- ◆ Barton may knock over a candle or lantern with one of his toys, creating a dangerous fire.
- ◆ At some point, the heroes may decide they need to destroy Barton's rattle, as he seems to be strongly connected to it. If the rattle is mentioned to Alistair, he will tell them that the rattle was is Barton's coffin when he was buried. With this news, the PCs may decide that they need to exhume Barton's body, which was buried not far from the farmhouse, under the child's favorite tree. Any attempt by the heroes to dig up this grave should be a tense encounter, with the potential threat of attack by the wolves (though, as in the encounter above, they will not actually attack humans). A more tangible threat comes from Annita herself, for if she learns of the actions of the heroes, she will do everything in her power to stop it—which may include using the wheellock belt pistol that is kept in Alistair's closet in the bedroom. They will find, of course, that the rattle is not there, for Annita removed it before Barton's burial.

The players will probably soon learn that Annita is potentially more of a threat than Barton, and may attempt to restrain or immobilize her. If this occurs, it should be remembered that Barton's telekinetic abilities are quite capable

of untying knots, or at least providing Annita with something to release herself with.

## Final Death

There are few potential ways for the haunting to be ended:

- ◆ The death of Annita. This is only likely to happen if the haunting goes unchecked for quite some time, and Annita continues to waste away at Barton's touch.
- ◆ The destruction of the rattle: The players will probably come to the realization that Barton's rattle is one of the keys to his presence, and decide that something needs to be done about it. Assuming that the rattle has been found in Annita's bedside table, it is in theory a small task to smash it—a single hit from any melee weapon will break the toy. However, as soon as Barton senses that someone intends to destroy his rattle, he will begin bouncing it around the floor, making it harder to hit. A strike against AC 3 will be required to hit the bouncing rattle.
- ◆ The burial of the rattle: Returning Barton's rattle to the grave will also put his spirit to rest. The players will face similar difficulties in doing this as with destroying the rattle, as Barton will resist the heroes attempts to do anything to the rattle.

Annita will be a significant factor in either of these last two solutions. She will see these as being direct attacks on Barton, and hence do anything in her power to prevent them from removing Barton from this world. The wolves prowling around the house can also be used to generate tension in the final scenes of this adventure.

When either the rattle is destroyed, or has been buried with Barton's body, the baby-ghost will be seen clearly for the first time, clinging to Annita. He can also be heard for the first time, releasing child's wail of pain that pierces the heart. As tightly as he holds to Annita, he's being dragged away from her, and for a moment it looks like something is actually being torn away from Annita! As Barton's image fades, Annita faints, falling into a deep sleep likely to last for a couple of days.

## Recurrence

Obviously, there is little chance of Barton's ghost returning after these events. Alistair will, however, be ever grateful to the heroes for their assistance, and may become a friend who will appear in later adventures.

Annita, however, will not be the same person she was. Having her only child taken from her a second time has left her a changed woman, without her previous love of life. She still paints, but her art is now mostly dark and somber, focusing on images of death and loss. There is little the heroes can do to help her situation, and she will resist any offer of help from the heroes or others. The Dungeon Master may wish to offer an opportunity for the PCs to help the DeForet family in a later adventure.

## HUNGRY LUCY

by "Jack the Reaper"

Now do I nightly waste, wanting my kindly rest:  
Now do I daily starve, wanting my lively food:  
Now do I always die, wanting thy timely mirth.

**Edmund Spenser**  
*Iambicum Trimetrum (1580)*

### Biography

Of all the horrors in Ravenloft, there is nothing more terrible than innocent children falling prey to tragedy. It is a hundred-fold more horrible if those children are denied the peace of death, hovering instead in a state of eternal torment. The tale about the ghost known as Hungry Lucy is one of those tragedies.

### Appearance

Lucy Rivanna was six years old when she died. She had a shoulder-length brown hair, and deep, black eyes. As a ghost, her hair is mussed, and there are bags hanging under her sunken eyes. Lucy is very pale and haggard. She wears a simple white dress, which hangs loosely over her skinny body. A careful observer will notice deep, pale bite marks on her arms and hands. Lucy's form looks solid enough, but in fact she is semicorporeal—only her mouth and teeth can touch physical objects. Lucy is invisible at all times. Therefore, she can be seen only by people who are able to see the invisible, though some claimed to have glimpsed her from the corner of their eye. It seems that children, especially little girls, are occasionally able to see Lucy clearly. Lucy rarely speaks, and the only words ever heard from her are "I'm hungry." Sometimes she's been heard sobbing.

### Hungry Lucy

**Second-magnitude ghost, Chaotic Neutral**

<b>Armor Class</b>	-2/5	<b>Str</b>	—
<b>Movement</b>	10	<b>Dex</b>	—
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	3	<b>Con</b>	—
<b>Hit Points</b>	15	<b>Int</b>	8
<b>THAC0</b>	17	<b>Wis</b>	6
<b>Morale</b>	8	<b>Cha</b>	13
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	1	<b>XP</b>	975
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	Special		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	See Below		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	Insubstantiality (semicorporeal), Invisibility, Rejuvenation, Magic immunity, Immunity to non-magical weapons.		

**Special Vulnerabilities** Objects associated with her parents cause fascination

**Magic Resistance** Nil

### Background

Lucy was the only child of Robert and Marrie Rivanna, born after long years of barrenness. Her parents were quite wealthy, and always pampered her with toys and sweets. No girl could have asked for more adoring parents, and no parents could have wished for more cheerful and loving young daughter. On Lucy's sixth birthday, tragedy struck. Robert and Marrie traveled to town, promising Lucy that they would return with the most beautiful dress they could find her as a birthday gift. As they didn't plan to stay in the town for long, they left Lucy at the house under the care of their servants, eagerly waiting for them to return.



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They never did. On their way back, Robert and Marrie were attacked and murdered by a gang of bandits, who later buried their corpses in the forest.

The bandits then traveled to the Rivanna home, where they met with the servants, their conspirators. The thieves ransacked the home, taking as much of the Rivanna's valuables as they could carry. They also searched for Lucy, not wanting to leave a living witness. But the girl, afraid of the strangers, had hidden herself too well in the rambling manor, and after a few hours the murderous bandits gave up in frustration. They locked up the house, sealing Lucy inside, and left to divide their booty.

Lucy remained alone in the house, terrified. The hours passed, and still there was no sign of her parents. The Rivanna home stood out of the town, so no neighbors were near enough to hear her cries. As night fell, Lucy was still crying and calling for her parents, but nobody answered.

Days passed, and Lucy started getting hungry. She ate all the food from the larder and the kitchen, and still nobody came to the house. Locked in by the bandits, Lucy was unable to leave her house to try and find some food outside.

By the time the neighbors finally started to suspect that something was wrong, and forced their way into the house, little Lucy was dead. Deep bite marks on her arms and fingers—caused by Lucy's own teeth—left no doubt as to the state of the despairing little girl before her death.

Lucy was buried in the local cemetery, and the house stood vacant for some years. None of the neighbors had the will to move into it.

Then, a foreign family came to the town. They had never heard about the Rivanna House's tragic history, and quite eagerly moved in. Then the strange occurrences began.

At first, they were just that: strange. Food which had been left in the locked larder was found partly eaten, no doubt by human teeth. Bite marks appeared on furniture and items. The parents were sure their naughty children were to blame, and ignored their children's fervent protests. Even when a child came crying with teeth marks on his arms, claiming to be bitten by an invisible monster, the parents didn't consider it anything more than a trick.

Then the voices began. The father heard chewing noises in the attic and rushed in, to find no one, though a desk leg had been gnawed inches deep. The mother heard the sobbing of a girl from within a room, yet none of her children were inside. Each member of the family swore to have heard, on one occasion at least, the voice of a little girl saying softly, "I'm hungry." They began to worry, but still took no action.

One night, the elder daughter decided to remove a portrait of a young couple (actually the Rivannas, and not to her liking) from the living room wall. As she tried to do this, she suddenly felt a sharp pain in her thumb. She looked at her hand, and screamed.

Her thumb was missing. Bitten off. Only a gray stump remained. The occurrences continued. One of the boys lost a toe while he was bathing alone—he didn't even notice it at first. The father awoke sweating from a nightmare, which was proved to be a reality as he fumbled for his nose—and found only a hole. While kissing the baby, the mother felt a sudden sensation of horrible hunger—and when she came to her senses, half of the infant's ear was already bleeding inside her throat.

The family was committed to the local asylum. Nobody else came to live in the house.

Hungry Lucy was left alone once more.

## Personality

Lucy has the personality of a little girl. Consumed by hunger, all she wants is to get something to eat. Since she doesn't understand that she is dead, she has no idea why everyone ignores her, why no one will give her something to eat. She tries to draw living people's attention to herself, but the only ways she can do that usually scare them to death. Therefore, she just eats everything she finds.

## Combat

Lucy never engages in combat; if attacked, she just disappears and runs away. However, Hungry Lucy can and does inflict damage in a most gruesome way. Lucy sneaks toward her victim invisibly, usually while he or she is sleeping or otherwise unaware of her presence, and bites the poor soul. Lucy always aims for an exposed extremity—a digit, ear, nose or toe. The victim feels a sudden pain—and then discovers that the bitten body part is gone, leaving behind a gray stump. The stump doesn't bleed, so only a few hit points are lost, but the victim must make a horror check with a -2 penalty upon discovering that one of his extremities has just been bitten off and eaten, without warning, by an invisible creature.

Lucy usually means no harm to the bitten person—she is simply hungry and wants to eat. However, if she is angry at someone, she might certainly bite them as well.

Once per day, Lucy's touch has the effect of causing Insatiable Hunger. This hunger is so compelling, the affected victim will bite a mouthful of the closest source of food—even if it means the flesh of a close friend.

This effect lasts for 1d4+1 rounds. Use of this power is involuntary—Lucy has no control over it.

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Lucy cannot be hurt by non-magical weapons. She can be turned by priests. Lucy is fascinated by things connected to her parents—e.g., pictures of them, favorite clothing, etc. If such an item is presented to her, she will stand still and watch it for 1d6 rounds. If someone is trying to damage one of these items, Lucy will bite them until they stop.

Hungry Lucy can only be put to rest if the dress bought for her by her parents on her birthday is found and brought to her; it is buried with the parents in the forest. The bodies of her parents must also be exhumed and reburied properly near their daughter's grave. When this happens, the people present will hear Robert and Marrie's voices, saying, "Lucy! We're home! We have a surprise for you!" and Lucy's voice laughing in joy; then, the voices will slowly fade, and Lucy will be hungry no more.

information the family members offer, if they offer any at all, is hallucinated and false.

- ◆ The visit in the asylum might be also used as a bridge to the adventures from the *Nightmare Lands* boxed set.

## Adventure Outline

Although the Rivanna House is located in Borca, it can be placed in most other domains as well without any difficulty.

The PCs are asked to investigate the haunting of Rivanna House by a family who recently moved there. The heroes have to uncover Lucy's history (questioning neighbors, etc.), find the way to lay her to rest, discover the parents' graves and release Lucy from her torment—before losing too many appendages...

Here are some tips and ideas for running the adventure:

- ◆ The DM may place the adventure as many or as few years after Lucy's death as he wishes. The number of neighbors familiar with the story, and their memory of its details, depends on the time frame in which the adventure takes place.
- ◆ Lucy's childhood friends (now older) may tell the PCs about the dress Lucy told them she wanted so much to get for her birthday, giving them a clue about how to put Lucy to rest.
- ◆ One of the bandits has recently been captured, and is waiting execution in jail. The PCs, perhaps directed to him by the neighbors, may try to extract information from him concerning the parents' fate and place of burial. It is possible that the bandit will try to negotiate, demanding to be released from the jail for his cooperation. This may create conflict between the PCs and the local governors.
- ◆ The PCs may visit the now-insane family in their asylum, and to try and get from them some details of the haunting. Of course, at least part of the

# MARCU VASILIS

by John W. Mangrum

A vacant mind invites dangerous inmates, as a deserted mansion tempts wandering outcasts to enter and take up their abode in its desolate apartments.

**Nicholas Hilliard**

## Biography

When men seek answers to questions that should not be asked, they leave the realm of what is known, and sail off into the seas of the unknown and unknowable.

Sometimes those searchers discover the Realms Beyond, places mankind was never meant to see.

Most who sail to those unearthly realms are forever lost in the seas of mystery. But sometimes, when the winds are right, the unfathomable tides will return *something* to our familiar shores.

Something to warn others not to follow.

## Appearance

Marcu Vasilis stands slightly under six feet in height, with a wiry frame and dark, unkempt hair. His clothes, having been recently stolen, are an imperfect fit, and he seems to have some minor difficulty in donning them. Marcu rarely blinks, and his stare is so intense that some have later complained of suffering headaches while his gaze falls upon them.

Marcu seems ill at ease in his own body. His fingers constantly fidget, yet often his little fingers are left rigidly outstretched, as though he has forgotten about them.

When Marcu speaks, he does so slowly and cautiously, greatly over-enunciating each syllable as if working his lips and jaw was an entirely unfamiliar sensation requiring his full attention.

The product of illithid biomancy, Marcu possesses a single, pale mauve, mucus-coated tentacle which can retract into a channel under his human tongue. This single tentacle can extend up to two feet in length, and is prehensile.

Marcu's skin is pale and dry, but most of the time otherwise not unusual. However, when Marcu's unsavory dietary demands are not met, his inhuman metabolism starts to assert itself to compensate. At these

times swollen, purple veins can be seen pulsing just beneath his skin.

## Marcu Vasilis

**Altered Human, Lawful Evil**

<b>Armor Class</b>	10	<b>Str</b>	11
<b>Movement</b>	12	<b>Dex</b>	12
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	8	<b>Con</b>	15
<b>Hit Points</b>	40	<b>Int</b>	18
<b>THAC0</b>	11	<b>Wis</b>	15
<b>Morale</b>	15	<b>Chr</b>	6
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	1	<b>XP</b>	7,000
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	By weapon or 2; see below		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Mind blast, see below		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	See below		
<b>Special Vulnerabilities</b>	Sunlight		
<b>Magic Resistance</b>	Special (90% resistance to all mind-affecting spells)		

## Background

Until recently, Marcu Vasilis was an amiable, if not entirely ethical, Borcan gambler who traveled the Core domains with his two good friends and bodyguards, Artur Carpaci and Lidia Kurator. Unbeknownst to the players who sat across from him at the card table, Marcu was also a talented psionicist, who used his psychic abilities to pile up his winnings night after night.

Sadly, the full details of Marcu Vasilis' life would do little good now, for the man known by that name no longer exists in any recognizable form. Three months ago, while using his mental talents at the tables, Marcu's mind momentarily and unknowingly brushed against the thoughts of the Illithid God-brain of Bluetspur.

That loathsome monstrosity is cursed to forever float in its saline pool, starving for the chance to directly experience the life it so desperately craves. When the God-brain tastes one of these lives, it cannot help but

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

crave to consume it whole, adding that mind's memories to its own. Over a period of the next several months, the God-brain insidiously broke down Marcu's inner defenses, and during an unnatural storm nearly a month ago, it was able to reach out, completely tear away Marcu's links to reality, and draw the doomed man bodily into its domain.

Once in Bluetspur, Marcu was instantly set upon by the illithids, who dragged him to their experimentation tables, extracted his still-living brain, and delivered it to their lord, the God-brain. The God-brain absorbed Marcu's mind into its own, feeding on Marcu's memories, vainly hoping these pale shadows of life could sate its own terrible hunger for true experiences. As always, they failed, and the God-brain was left as starved for stimuli as ever. Normally, the God-brain would sink back into its ennui and start the search anew, but this time, it had cause to remain focused.

In the last moments before the God-brain sucked Marcu into Bluetspur, the doomed psionist had reached out to another mind, that of his beloved companion Lidia, in a desperate attempt to anchor himself to her stable, sane reality. In that fleeting instant, Lidia witnessed the horrors which surrounded Marcu, and the God-brain saw *her* in turn.

Desperate to devour this mind as well, the God-brain sent out a mental order to its illithid minions: Another mind must be retrieved. Since the God-brain could not sense Lidia's mind again after the momentary connection was broken, something would have to physically seek her out and return her to Bluetspur.

Fortunately, the illithids were prepared. Unlike the illithids of many other worlds, the mind flayers of Bluetspur have developed into skilled biomancers, shaping living organisms to suit their needs. The shattered brethren and vampiric illithids are but two examples of the illithids' fiendish artistry. Nor are they adverse to experimenting on their own kind, although it is more common that they experiment on their tadpoles than mature, adult illithids.

The ruined body of Marcu Vasilis, kept unnaturally alive by the illithids' eldritch devices, would walk again. Working feverishly, the illithids transplanted the cerebrum of one of their own kind into Marcu's hollowed skull, altering his physiology to sustain the new tenant. All too soon, the alien creature inhabiting Marcu Vasilis' body was ready to begin its search for Lidia Kurator.

The God-brain, still using a fraction of its immense intellect to maintain the connection to the spot from which Marcu had been stolen, now simply relaxed that connection, and "Marcu" slipped back from whence he came, a small hamlet in Mordent. Appearing in an upstairs bedroom of a quaint bed and breakfast, Marcu

materialized unclothed and coated in brackish slime, much to the shock of the current guest.

It was perhaps fortunate for that luckless traveler that his terror did not last long. His brain went to feed the hunger of the inhuman *thing* calling itself Marcu Vasilis; his clothes went to cover the creature's body.

## Personality

The illithid brain currently inhabiting Marcu's skull is utterly alien to anything around it. The illithid mind is still unfamiliar with Marcu's human body, and his strange mannerisms and bizarre movements are more than enough to convince most people that Marcu Vasilis is stark, raving mad. Marcu speaks slowly and with great deliberation, having both to concentrate on controlling his strange, new mouth, and having to pluck the correct words from the minds of those around him. Frequently, those who Marcu looks at hear a buzzing in their heads whenever Marcu is about to speak.

The illithid's preferred form of communication is via telepathy; in fact, the illithid's true name is a mental image which simply cannot be spoken by human tongues. However, any human who is "gifted" with this image of the creature's name, or has any direct mental contact with the illithid, must make an immediate madness check.

The illithid hiding behind Marcu's face is not overjoyed to be in this alien body, and desires to quickly find Lidia Kurator and deliver her to Bluetspur so that its brain can be transferred back into its own body. Like any normal illithid, Marcu thinks of the humans around him as lesser creatures, mere primitive chattel, and will quickly seek to surround himself with "thralls," servants whose minds are utterly under his control.

## Combat

Being transplanted into a human body has not weakened the powers of Marcu's illithid brain one bit. Although Marcu's human body lacks the mucus secretions that magnify an illithid's psionic abilities, his metabolism has been modified to compensate for this shortcoming. So long as Marcu devours one human brain a week, his body can continue to produce the enzymes needed to empower his alien mind.

In order to aid the feeding process, a single, retractable tentacle is hidden under Marcu's human tongue. This tentacle is equipped with the same glands as those of normal illithids, able to dissolve bone and nervous tissue. However, since Marcu only has one such tentacle (compared to an illithid's four), the process of extracting a brain is much less efficient than it would be for a normal mind flayer.

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If feeding on a stunned victim, Marcu can automatically draw out his prey's brain in four rounds, (automatically killing the victim). As a last resort, Marcu can also use the tentacle in close-quarters melee. With a successful attack roll, Marcu's tentacle will attach itself to his victim's head, inflicting 2 points of damage. Each subsequent round, he automatically inflicts another 2 points of damage until the victim breaks free or dies. If the victim is reduced to 0 hit points in this manner, Marcu has extracted his brain. A victim of such an attack can wrench the tentacle loose with a successful Bend Bars roll, or can simply sever the tentacle by inflicting 6 points of damage with an edged weapon. For this reason, Marcu is unlikely to actually use his tentacle to attack an active opponent.

As with normal mind flayers, Marcu's first line of offense and defense rests squarely in his impressive array of mental powers. Primary among these is his *mind blast*, a field of invisible psychic disruption projected in a cone 60 feet long, 5 feet wide where Marcu stands, and 20 feet wide at the opposite end. All those caught within this area must succeed at a saving throw vs. wands or be stunned and unable to act for 3d4 rounds. Thanks to his illithid brain, Marcu is 90% resistant to all mind-affecting magic.

Marcu's additional powers depend on whether the Dungeon Master wishes to use psionics in his campaign; two options are provided.

**Psionic Summary:** If psionics are in use, Marcu has the following psychic abilities:

Level	Dis/Sci/Dev	Attack/Defense	Score	PSPs
10	4/5/15	EW, II/All	18	320

**Psychokinesis - Devotions:** control body, levitation.

**Psychometabolism - Sciences:** body equilibrium.

**Psychoportation - Sciences:** teleport.

**Telepathy - Sciences:** domination, mindlink.

**Devotions:** awe, ESP, ego whip, id insinuation, intrusive taste link\*, post-hypnotic suggestion.

\* Power found in *The Illithiad*.

**Arcane Summary:** If the Dungeon Master does not use psionics in his campaign, then the following spell-like abilities may be used instead: *suggestion*, *charm person*, *charm monster*, *ESP*, *levitate*. Marcu may use these powers at will, at a rate of one a round, as a 7<sup>th</sup>-level mage. In addition, all his victims must make their saving throws vs. his mental powers with a -4 penalty.

The Dungeon Master should also consult Chapter Ten: Mazes of the Mind in *Domains of Dread* to see how the Demiplane affects Marcu's psionic powers. Any human

or demihuman character using mind-affecting spells or psionic abilities on Marcu may be required to make an immediate madness check, at the DM's option. In addition, several of Marcu's powers may require the target make madness checks in addition to any other effects, also at the Dungeon Master's discretion. This ability to force heroes to make madness checks can be a withering addition to Marcu's arsenal, and Marcu will be sure to use it often.

Although Marcu need only devour one human or demihuman brain each week, he will gladly devour many more if given the opportunity. If, for whatever reason, he is unable to consume a human brain for longer than a week's time, his illithid-altered metabolism will begin to weaken. Each day after the first week, he will either lose 40 PSPs or lose an effective level of ability when using spell-like powers, depending on the above option used. At the same time, his illithid alterations will become more apparent; pulsing purple veins become visible under his skin, vainly attempting to secrete the mucus needed to supplement his psionic brain. Marcu can regain any lost mental prowess simply by sating his hunger for human brains.

Although the creature posing as Marcu Vasilis now possesses a human body, its mind is still that of an illithid, one now in a setting entirely unfamiliar to it. To ease the transition, the mind flayers altered Marcu's eyes, granting him infravision to 60 feet, since this is an illithid's primary sense. However, concepts of normal sight, such as colors, remain entirely new to Marcu, and his new, largely-human eyes have revealed a confusing world of all-new sensory input. Marcu can see colors, but is so unfamiliar with them he cannot distinguish one from another. Of more immediate benefit to his opponents, Marcu retains an illithid's instinctual loathing of the sun; Marcu suffers a -2 penalty to all die rolls while in direct sunlight.

Lastly, Marcu Vasilis did not leave Bluetspur empty-handed. He is in possession of a dozen *thrall clasps*, more examples of the Bluetspur mind flayers' expertise in biomancy. Developed from the illithids' own immature tadpoles, these organisms barely count as living creatures now. Vaguely resembling pinkish, four-limbed starfish, this organic technology was developed to help the illithids maintain control over their thralls. Use of a *thrall clasp* is quite simple: Once a mind flayer has used its own mental powers to dominate a victim, it then places a *thrall clasp* anywhere along that victim's spinal column. The mindless *clasp* senses the "psionic circuitry" the illithid has implanted in the victim's mind, and continually feeds it back into the thrall. In effect, a thrall clamp can keep a victim *charmed* indefinitely, with minimum attention needed from the controlling mind flayer.

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Such victims are little better than automatons, blindly obedient to their master and barely able to think for themselves. Fortunately, once discovered a *clasp* can be easily killed (3 hp) and removed, instantly freeing the victim from the illithid's control.

*Thrall clasps* die quickly if not in contact with a sentient host. Until Marcu starts creating thralls, he keeps his supply attached to his own spine.

## THE MAN WHO LOST HIS MIND

This adventure is designed for four to six characters of levels 8–10. This adventure utilizes information found in “The Realms Beyond” in *The Book of Souls*, as well as *The Illithiad* Monstrous Arcana accessory. Although all the information required to run this adventure is provided here, Dungeon Masters can use those sources to add a great deal of depth to the events to follow.

### Background

On the night the Illithid God-brain drew Marcu Vasilis into Bluetspur, the doomed psionicist was in Waterford, a tiny hamlet located at the first major fork in the Arden River. Marcu's companions, Artur and Lidia, were steering him towards Mordentshire's Saulbridge Sanitarium, in a doomed attempt to seek help for their friend.

When the God-brain launched its final onslaught, superimposing the reality of Bluetspur onto Marcu's senses, the panicking man reached out to the mind of his companion Lidia, hoping to anchor himself to her sanity. Sadly, this grasping attempt at salvation did not succeed. Even more unfortunate, his mental bond with Lidia momentarily put her mind in contact with that of the God-brain; this left Lidia wracked with nightmares and in a state of shock, and left the God-brain hungering to add her mind to its consciousness.

With Lidia in a fragile state, the two companions completed the journey to Mordentshire, Artur bringing Lidia to Saulbridge and the attention of its doctor-in-residence, Dr. Sean McClintock. Although it was too late for Marcu, Artur hoped Lidia's mind could still be healed.

A month has passed since Lidia was admitted to the sanitarium, and Dr. McClintock has recorded her terrifying account in his medical journals. In that month Lidia's strong will has been making a rapid recovery.

Although she still suffers from nightmarish dreams of the hellish otherworld Marcu revealed to her, she has regained her strength and Dr. McClintock believes she will soon be well enough to leave.

In the meantime, Dr. McClintock has informed the local law enforcement of the possibility that Marcu may still be in the region. Although Dr. McClintock's imaginative guesses have privately brought him close to realizing Marcu's final fate, the doctor knows he has no way to prove his wild claims. Therefore, he has given the Mordentshire law a story somewhat easier to believe: that Marcu is a dangerous madman on the loose, lost in paranoid dementia and, disturbingly, able to read the minds of those around him. Sheriff Finhallen, head of the local law, is widely known for playing his cards close to his chest, and has kept Dr. McClintock's warnings out of common knowledge, while making sure his deputies are all doubly on the lookout.

### The Adventure Begins

The adventure begins with the heroes relaxing in the *Sailor's Sun*, one of Mordentshire's less reputable inns and taverns. The weather has been notably hot and muggy today, even taking Mordent's harsh weather into account, and the tavern is quite busy, as numerous ruffians (including the player characters) seek refuge from the sun.

Marked by a strange, greenish sign looking discomfitingly like the sun as seen from the deck of a sunken galleon, the *Sailor's Sun* is located near the southern road into town, and is also the closest tavern to Saulbridge. If the heroes decide not to visit the *Sailor's Sun*, the following scene can be transferred to any Mordentshire inn without difficulty. Read or paraphrase the following:

“Marcu?” This outburst from a patron sitting near a large window suddenly catches your attention. Staring outside onto the sunny street, the burly, bald-headed man looks as though he's seen a ghost.

“Marcu!” The stranger bolts up from his chair, peering out the window for a wavering moment longer before dashing out the door.

If any of the heroes care to look outside to see what startled the patron so, they see him (Artur Carpaciu) rush up to a man in the street, one who appears to simply be passing by. At first, the man (Marcu Vasilis) doesn't respond to Artur's calls, but Artur quickly catches him up, stopping him with a hand on his arm.

Marcu's squinting expression is difficult to read, but it appears as though he doesn't recognize Artur at first.

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However, it seems that Artur quickly refreshes his old friend's memory and gently leads him back inside. Continue with the following:

The burly man leads his leaner, disheveled companion inside and calls out to the barkeep, asking that two dinners be brought up to his room. The barkeep grunts something noncommittal, and the grinning, burly man and his bewildered-looking companion pass you on their way to the stairs.

As they pass your table, the newcomer's gaze slides over your group as he takes in the room. Perhaps the unusual heat has gotten to you, but when the disheveled man's glance passes over you, you swear you can *feel* its slimy, tingling touch, like a wave of spiders crawling across your brain.

Artur leads Marcu upstairs to his room to rest, but Marcu has little interest in relaxing. In fact, the moment the illithid realized that Artur was one of Marcu's companions, it slipped a suggestion into Artur's pliable mind: Marcu wants to get Artur somewhere private so he can "pick his brain," so to speak.

If Marcu's unnerving gaze rouses the heroes' suspicion and they shadow the two men up to their room, proceed to the next scene as soon as they peek through Artur's door. If the heroes let Artur and Marcu pass, they can later be attracted to Artur's room by the loud sounds of a struggle. Whether moments or hours pass, as soon as the heroes look in on Artur and Marcu read or paraphrase the following:

You are greeted by a sight as bizarre as it is horrific. The burly man is slumped on his knees, his eyes rolled up in his head and his limbs twitching with random spasms. His disheveled companion is bent over him, standing at his side and clutching the burly man's head in his hands. Indeed, the wiry stranger has clamped his mouth to the side of his burly friend's skull, his jaw wide and his lips sealed around the twitching man's ear.

The strange stranger glances up at you, and again you can *feel* his gaze oozing through your skin. He seems to swallow something—you can actually see *something* slither down his throat—then he releases his companion, who collapses to the floor, unmoving. Wiping the blood from his lips, the stranger straightens his posture, taking on an almost regal demeanor. Slowly, carefully crafting each syllable, his words buzzing in your ears, he speaks to you calmly.

*"Take me to the one who saw."*

Allow the players a moment to declare their actions, then interrupt by declaring "Stand aside for the Law!" in

as officious a manner as possible. Sheriff Finhallen and a group of his deputies swarm up the stairs, either following Marcu into the inn or attracted by the same struggle which alerted the heroes. Sheriff Finhallen, a tall and imposing figure, plows a path through the PCs, warning them to stand back, and that they're dealing with a dangerous lunatic. Continue with the following:

The sheriff steps past you into the doorway, and sees the morbid sight which you first witnessed. He looks at the burly man's body, lying lifeless on the floor, and mutters something under his breath. Then, while keeping his eyes on the stranger, he snaps his fingers at one of his deputies.

"The helmet."

The deputy produces the requested item, a heavy, metal helm which would cover the entire head. Helmet in hand, the sheriff steps further into the room, his deputies slipping in after him. The sheriff stares directly into the stranger's oily gaze. Although his eyes flinch, his voice remain steely.

"Marcu Vasilis, you are under arrest. You don't know what you're doing, and we don't want to harm you, so just come quietly. Don't make us use force."

The stranger—Marcu Vasilis—curls his lips in a contorted attempt at a smile. A moment later he narrows his eyes, just a bit... and the torrent hits you.

Your minds are battered by nightmarish visions of slithering, shapeless *things* in a darkened world, of soft tentacles sliding along every inch of your skin, and of inhuman horrors which cannot be spoken!

Marcu has unleashed his *mental blast*. In these cramped quarters, everyone falls into its cone-shaped area of effect, and must make saving throws vs. wands or be stunned, reeling from the loathsome imagery, for 3d4 rounds. The deputies all automatically fail their saves, and fall to the floor, shrieking and clutching their heads. Sheriff Finhallen succumbs as well, but regains just enough of his composure to fling the heavy helmet in the direction of any hero who passes his saving throw. The sheriff hisses out, "Just get it on his head," before he too is overcome by the visions.

The helmet is lined with lead, and was prepared specifically in case Marcu ever showed up. Dr. McClintock has an amateur's interest in psychic phenomena and psionics, and advised that wearing lead headgear disrupts a psionist's powers. Most of Dr. McClintock's knowledge of psionics is based on rumor and legend, and is highly untrustworthy, but he happens to be right in this case.

If the heroes can wrestle the helmet onto Marcu's head (and fasten the heavy leather chin strap), Marcu will

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be unable to use his mental powers and will surrender at once. In truth, he doesn't put up much of a fight; first from Artur's mind, and then from the sheriff's, Marcu has started to piece together Lidia's current location, and he doesn't mind being captured.

After the heroes secure Marcu and the effects of the mind blast have worn off, the deputies will securely shackle Marcu and cart him off to a cell while Sheriff Finhallen inspects Artur's body and lingers to speak with the heroes (and any other gawkers from the inn). Finhallen thanks the heroes for their aid, and asks them to testify at Marcu's trial. Vasilis' crime: murder.

**Sheriff Owen Finhallen, hm F5:** AC 6 (studded leather); MV 12; hp 35; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (silver long sword); SZ M (6'2"); ML champion (16); AL LG.  
S 14, D 12, C 15, I 15, W 13, Ch 10  
*Personality:* secretive, suspicious

**Deputies, hm, F1 (6):** AC 8 (leather armor); MV 12; hp 10; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (footman's mace); SZ M (5'10"); ML average (10); Int average (10); AL LN.

## The Trial

Centuries ago, when Mordentshire was just a small settlement, trials were held in the common rooms of one of the village's inns or taverns. By the time Mordentshire had grown to the point where it could afford to build its own courthouse, the public trials had become so ingrained in tradition that they're still done to this day.

Marcu Vasilis spends the night after the murder bogged down in chains in the gaol. Meanwhile, rumors of the mad stranger's eerie encounter with the law spread throughout the town, and by the time the trial is convened the following evening the whole town is buzzing about the murder.

The trial is held at the stately old Blackard Inn, with Mayor Foxgrove presiding as magistrate. As witnesses, the heroes are led to their reserved seats, and good thing for it; the inn's greatroom is otherwise standing-room only. When all else is ready, Marcu himself is brought in, bound in a straitjacket, his legs in shackles, and his face hidden behind the heavy lead helmet.

Sheriff Finhallen is the first to testify, offering the explanation that Vasilis is a mentalist gone mad, a danger to himself and others. He also offers his estimation that, based on the single wound which slew Artur Carpaciu, Marcu stabbed his companion in the ear with a stiletto or similar sharp object. However, when Mayor Foxgrove

inquires further on this point, Finhallen is forced to admit that no such weapon was found at the scene.

The heroes are then brought up to testify, one at a time. Foxgrove has each one describe what they saw, occasionally asking for further details. For instance, he may ask if any of the heroes saw the theorized "stiletto," or if Marcu could have had time to hide such a weapon before the heroes burst in.

After the heroes have had their say, Foxgrove calls for the defense witnesses. Only one person speaks on Marcu's behalf: Dr. McClintock. Although McClintock makes one brief reference to having an earlier, more fantastic theory concerning Marcu Vasilis' condition, he now offers his medical opinion that Vasilis is dangerously paranoid and delusional. Vasilis believes that he is surrounded by inhuman monsters at all times, and thinks he's merely defending himself from these horrors when he lashes out. Summing up, Dr. McClintock urges that Marcu be committed to Saulbridge indefinitely. Between Finhallen and McClintock, the heroes should hear most of Marcu's background as presented in "The Realms Beyond."

Finally, Marcu Vasilis himself is given the chance to speak. Read or paraphrase the following:

As Dr. McClintock returns to his seat, the mayor turns his attention to the accused.

"Marcu Vasilis, you have been accused of the crime of murder. Before this court reaches its final verdict, have you any words to speak to your own defense?"

The deputies to either side of Vasilis help him to his feet. Although the cumbersome helmet hides most of his face, you can see that once again his mouth has curled into an despicable smirk.

Marcu speaks slowly and cautiously, again crafting each syllable as if each one were being spoken for the very first time.

*"When your sun is dead... we will shape you to serve us."*

For a long moment, the entire room, even the constantly murmuring crowd, falls silent. Vasilis' calm and confident statement hangs in the air. Everyone seems to understand that it is not a threat; it is a simple statement of fact.

Mayor Foxgrove clears his throat, breaking the silence. Grinning gamely, he offers his verdict.

"The court finds your attempted threat quite quaint, but you should know that I don't have a *son*. Marcu Vasilis, this court finds you guilty of the murder of Artur Carpaciu. This court also finds you unfit of mind, unable to judge your own actions, and a danger to yourself and others. Therefore this court orders that you immediately be committed to Saulbridge Sanitarium. Deputies, take him to his new home. Court adjourned."



# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

The deputies immediately haul Marcu off to the sanitarium, aided by several of Saulbridge's looming orderlies. This, of course, is exactly what Vasilis wants.

As the crowd begins to disperse a bit, Dr.

McClintock winds his way to the heroes, introducing himself. He politely asks them to stop by the sanitarium sometime in the next few days (at their convenience, of course). He'd like to ask them a few questions about just what they experienced at the *Sailor's Sun*. The truth of the matter is that, although Dr. McClintock has publicly abandoned his wild theory of a hideous alien intelligence snatching Marcu Vasilis away, he still considers the mystery unresolved.

Whenever the heroes visit Saulbridge, proceed to the next scene.

## A Fox in the Henhouse

Marcu was taken to Saulbridge immediately after the trial and tossed in a padded cell. Now under the same roof as his target, he made good his escape. At the very first opportunity, as soon as the orderlies had left him unattended, he extended his prehensile tentacle, using it to unfasten the chin strap on his lead-lined helmet. Once rid of that bothersome limitation, Marcu's psionic powers made short work of his straitjacket.

The next time an orderly looked in on him, Marcu immediately dominated his mind, using a thrall clasp to cement his control over the new slave. First Marcu made one orderly into an unwilling thrall. Then two. Then the rest. By the time Dr. McClintock returned to the sanitarium, Marcu had nearly finished bending the inmates to his will as well. Quickly capturing McClintock and dominating his mind in turn, Marcu sat back and made his would-be jailor into his servant, sending him to fetch Lidia from her cell.

This moment of smug overconfidence was the sole flaw in the illithid's plot. Lidia, largely recovered from the shock suffered during the God-brain's contact, and hardened to the mind flayers' horrors, had watched Marcu—or the creature pretending to be her poor Marcu—conquer the sanitarium. When McClintock came for her, she was ready. Having spent years as Marcu's bodyguard, she was also more than a match for the poor academic. Overpowering the doctor, she discovered the *thrall clasp* attached to his neck and tore it free, releasing McClintock from Marcu's influence.

Immediately alerted to the doctor's freedom, Marcu sent his thralls to capture the pair. Before she could protest, Dr. McClintock locked Lidia in her cell once more, promising to bring help and assuring Lidia that her cell was the safest place to be. The doctor then

attempted to escape the asylum, but found Marcu's thralls blocking the few exits.

Dr. McClintock and Marcu are now caught in a game of cat-and-mouse; McClintock is avoiding Marcu and his thralls, while trying to escape the asylum to summon help. Marcu seeks to capture the doctor and reclaim the key to Lidia's cell. For all his power over lesser minds, Marcu currently finds a simple, locked door to be his greatest obstacle.

When the heroes arrive, Marcu will immediately turn his attention towards their destruction, wishing to deal with the larger threat before continuing his hunt for the doctor.

It is nearly impossible to cross the sanitarium's grounds without being noticed by an observer within the asylum, so moments after the heroes reach the front door they will be met by a pair of orderlies. These orderlies are utterly under Marcu's control, and as one leads the heroes into the reception room, the other locks the outside door again and walks off to hide the key.

Waiting for the heroes in the reception room is their first hint that something has gone wrong: a dead patient, his hollowed head silent testimony to Marcu's appetite. At that moment, the assault begins.

Marcu will do all he can to avoid a direct confrontation with the heroes. Instead, he will maneuver through the building to avoid them, while pelting them with psionic attacks from afar. Marcu's psionics are largely limited by line of sight, but he can see through the eyes of his thralls. Considering the power levels of the heroes and the fact that Marcu is working alone, here are two words of advice for handling his attacks: Be Merciless. Marcu can order any of his thralls, be they orderlies or madmen, to attack the heroes without any concern for their own lives, but he considers this a waste of resources. Instead, Marcu will mainly use the thralls as distractions while channeling his psionic assault through their minds. One of Marcu's preferred tricks is to dominate the mind of one hero, and use him to attack another, weakening the party as a whole.

Points to look for:

- ◆ Dr. McClintock's medical journal is lying out on his desk in his private office. If the heroes discover this, allow them to read the "Realms Beyond" article (except for the DM's notes, of course).
- ◆ McClintock himself is doing all he can to avoid Marcu and his thralls, but the net is tightening around him. The heroes should discover the doctor fairly early in the proceedings. He can explain his theories of illithid experimentation, and that another patient (Lidia Kurator) was also witness to these events (again, summarizing "Realms Beyond.") McClintock will also deliver the key to Lidia's cell

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

into the heroes' more capable hands. He knows that Marcu has come for her, and begs them to get her out of harm's way.

- ◆ Lidia is still locked in her cell. Although unable to physically reach her or place a *thrall clasp* on her back, Marcu has successfully dominated her mind. Although this is not immediately apparent (in fact, Lidia isn't even aware of it herself), Marcu can see through her eyes if he concentrates, and can control her actions. However, he only does this as a last resort, if Lidia has been freed and he needs a surprise attack. For her part, even without the illithid's domination, Lidia still has feelings for her companion Marcu, and begs the heroes not to kill him, being convinced that he can still be saved. (See "Recurrence" for more information.)
- ◆ Lastly, if and when the heroes finally do pin down Marcu, he will defend himself with his *mental blast*. If this successfully stuns the entire party, he will begin devouring their brains, one by one, finally confirming his truly inhuman nature. However, it's more likely the battered heroes will prove triumphant. In Marcu's last moment, when he realizes he's lost the game, read or paraphrase the following:

The cornered creature surely knows his time is at an end, and he slumps in defeat. Although Marcu Vasilis stands before you in a human body, his utterly inhuman intellect squirms and writhes all around you, curdling your thoughts and making your skin crawl. One more time, he shows his profane smile, and offers one more simple statement of fact:

*"Know that I do not walk alone. We will always be watching you, from behind your faces."*

**Saulbridge Sanitarium:** The exact details of this building are left to the Dungeon Master, with the following guidelines. The sanitarium is a large, three-story structure and is essentially rectangular in shape, although one corner features a round tower. The sanitarium grounds are surrounded by a high brick wall, topped by rusted iron spikes. There are many windows, but all are barred. There are few doors, and they are locked.

The ground floor is taken up by a reception room, a study, a large kitchen, a laundry, a surgery, and Dr. McClintock's private quarters and offices. The main foyer prominently features a portrait of Docteur Germain d'Honaire.

The upper floors are taken up by long, narrow hallways and cells for the patients. Lidia's cell is on the third floor.

**Dr. Sean McClintock, 0-level hm:** AC 10; MV 12; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (knife); SZ M (5'9"); ML unsteady (7); AL LN.

S 9, D 10, C 15, I 16, W 11, Ch 13

*Personality:* curious, imaginative

**Lidia Kurator, hf F7:** AC 8 (Dexterity); MV 12; hp 40; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon (unarmed); SZ M (5'7"); ML elite (14); AL CG.

S 14, D 16, C 10, I 12, W 16, Ch 14

*Personality:* frightened, loyal

**Orderlies, hm F3 (dominated) (4):** AC 8 (padded); MV 12; hp 20; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (club); SZ M (6"); ML fearless (20); Int average (10); AL N; XP 65.

**Madmen hm&f (dominated) (10):** AC 10; MV 12; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SZ M; ML fearless (20); Int average (8); AL CN; XP 35.

## Recurrence

If Marcu escapes Mordenshire with Lidia in tow, the heroes may find themselves drawn into a desperate chase. Marcu will head for the nearest stretch of the Misty Border; as soon as he and his prisoner enter the Mists, the God-brain will be able to detect them and can lead them towards Bluetspur...

If Marcu is captured alive, Lidia will beg the heroes to help her restore his mind. Her nightmarish contact with the God-brain, combined with Dr. McClintock's fanciful theories on illithids, have convinced her that, in some form, the mind of her beloved Marcu is still alive, trapped somewhere in Bluetspur. She is willing to risk her own life in the desperate attempt to return Marcu's body (with its loathsome tenant) to Bluetspur, find Marcu's mind, and somehow restore everything to its proper place. Of course, she's really not sure how to do any of this, which is where the heroes come in...

If the Dungeon Master wants to further explore the Lovecraftian horrors of Bluetspur, either of the above scenarios could be used to lead into the adventure *Thoughts of Darkness*. Lidia's desperate quest to save her beloved Marcu from the alien horrors of the illithids' realm could add another layer of drama and pathos to those events.

Just as Marcu warned, he is not the only Altered to have been sent forth by the mind flayers. Who knows how many other mentalists have been drawn into the nightmarish realm of Bluetspur? How many of their bodies have since walked the lands of the Core under the control of a new inhabitant? This method of creating "human illithids" could be applied to other mind flayers living among humans, such as the villainous cult leader in "Rite of Terror," from *Book of Crypts*.

With thanks to David Wise for the creative advice which led to this article. Some information here was first presented in *Ravenloft II: The House on Gryphon Hill*, designed by Tracy & Laura Hickman.

# ANTON DE MARRISETTE

by Benjamin "Wolfshadow" Zolberg

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,  
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen.

**Alexander Pope**  
*An Essay on Man (1733)*

## Biography

In the dark lands of the mists many are doomed. Some due to their own evil, some due to the deeds of others, but only a few are condemned for both. One such as this is Anton de Marrisette—the living vampire.

## Appearance

Anton is a hideous monstrosity. He has a large hunchback, his legs are short and bent, and there's a leathery membrane, similar to that of bats' wings, under his arms, which is connected to his torso. His nails turned into sharp claws, and there are small suction holes at the tip of his fingers. Anton's skin is pale and in his red eyes there's an eternal flicker of madness. Four long fangs, which projects out of his mouth, twist his face along with his deformed nose that is shaped like that of a bat. His once black hair is now mingled with strikes of brown fuzzy fur, which also covers large parts of his body. His only pieces of clothing are a pair of old ragged trousers and a large golden amulet, which dangles from his neck.

## Background

Anton was a rich and powerful landowner who always looked for ways to increase both his wealth and his power. One day Anton came up with what he considered to be a brilliant scheme: Anton had a friend called Leoric who was a wizard and shared Anton's lust for power, and to him Anton suggested the following deal. Leoric will help Anton to get rid of Anton's neighboring landowners and to take over their property, and Anton will give Leoric some of the magical items, which he possessed, and since Anton did possess some powerful items Leoric agreed.

## Anton de Marrisette

### 7<sup>th</sup>-level Thief, Chaotic Evil

<b>Armor Class</b>	6	<b>Str</b>	18/09
<b>Movement</b>	12, Fl 16 (D)	<b>Dex</b>	17
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	7	<b>Con</b>	15
<b>Hit Points</b>	48	<b>Int</b>	14
<b>THAC0</b>	17	<b>Wis</b>	12
<b>Morale</b>	16	<b>Chr</b>	3
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	1	<b>XP</b>	9,000
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	1d6+3 (claws) or 1d4+3 (fists)		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Blood drain		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	Supersonic shriek, +1 or better weapon to hit		
<b>Special Vulnerabilities</b>	Bright light		
<b>Magic Resistance</b>	See below		
<b>Thieving Skills</b>	MS 90% CW 85% HS 95%		

So with the help of a magical item, which Leoric created, Anton began a series of brutal murders, using the item's abilities to wound his victims and drain their blood. After a short while Anton owned all the lands in the area, and his hunger was, for the time being, satisfied. However, Leoric's hunger was far from full. He started blackmailing Anton, threatening to tell Anton's wife Lyzel, who was the daughter of one of Anton's victims, about Anton's part in her father's untimely death.

Angered Anton decided that he should get rid of the dangerous Leoric and so, one night he ambushed the wizard and tried to kill him. Unfortunately for Anton, Leoric had foreseen the attack and was ready for it. Using his spells he blocked Anton and then used a poisoned dart to knock him out. When Anton finally recovered he found out that he was the prisoner of the man he wished to kill, and believed that his life will soon come to an end. However, Leoric's had other things in mind for Anton. For the following days the vicious Leoric spend a

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

large amount of time in mocking Anton for his foolishness while reviling his true plan. As it turned out to be, not only did Leoric told Lyzel the truth about her father, he also convinced her to help him in taking over Anton's place both as landowner and, to Anton's greatest pain and shock, as her husband.

But that was not all, instead of just killing Anton, Leoric, who was a vindictive man, planed to use him to strengthen his hold over his newly owned lands. Using one of the magical items Anton gave him, he transformed Anton into a hideous monster, and in order to make sure that Anton will obey put a magical amulet, which he created in order to control Anton's actions, around his neck.

For the following weeks, Leoric ordered Anton to kill those who stood in his way. However, though Anton's body survived the change, his mind didn't. And as the time passed Anton's madness grow so much until Leoric lost control over him.

One misty night Anton, who was trapped in a cave near his former estate, managed to escape. Hungry for revenge, Anton burst into the house, catching Leoric and Lyzel together. The sight was too much for Anton to bear, and he went into frenzy. Leoric tried to stop him, but Anton's rage and madness shielded him from the mental orders, and with a cry of triumph he caught Leoric and drained his blood. Yet his hunger, both for revenge and for blood, was far from being filled. He caught screaming Lyzel and drained her blood as well, enjoying from her screams of pain and horror. But his joy was short for the cries alerted the servants who attacked Anton from behind. Though unharmed by these attacks, Anton was furious, and killed all the servants until he was the only living creature in the estate.

Anton's earlier action had already caught the attention of the dark powers, and when the massacre was over the Mists rose from the ground and cover the house. When the Mists finally dissolved Anton found himself inside an old tower just outside of Pont-a-Museau, in Richemulot.

## Personality

Anton is full of rage and hatred towards everything. Knowing that in his condition, he would never be able to gain power and wealth, Anton is determined to cast havoc among those who posses these things (which makes him a natural enemy of the Renier family). He also has a deep hatred towards wizards and he had sworn to destroy all of them. However, for the time being he settles for attacking those in Pont-a-Museau who are rich and powerful, and according to his sadistic nature, killing them in the most brutal fashion and draining their blood.

## Combat

Anton prefers to attack his victims from behind or while they are asleep, usually using his suction holes to drain most of their blood and then his claws and fangs finishes the killing.

If forced to engage face to face combat, however, Anton uses either his claws or his fists. On a natural roll of 20 he manages to put his fingers on any exposed part of the victim's body and begin to drain his blood at the rate of one Con point per round. In order to escape Anton's grasp the victim must make a successful Bend Bars roll. The wounds caused by the suction holes inflict 1d10 points of damage.

Twice per day Anton can use his special vocal cords to produce a supersonic shriek, which forces everyone who hears it within a 5 yards radius to make a successful roll vs. spells with a -3 penalty. If the roll fails, the victim becomes deaf for 1d6 rounds and is disoriented for 1d4 rounds (a successful roll reduce the time to half). However, Anton uses this ability only as a last resort since the sound affects his sensitive hearing and causes him to become great pain (1d4 points of damage, no saving throw). Furthermore Anton can summon a swarm of bats, which will arrive in 1d6 rounds.

Anton's bent legs are most powerful and allow him to jump to the height 6 yards forward or 4 yards upward, which along with his "wings" allows him to glide in the air at the movement rate of 16 and to maneuver with the class D.

Though Anton has no infravision, his special vocal cords and sensitive hearing allow him to send and receive subsonic shrieks which functions like neutral radar, and give him a mental image of the place he's in. Because of that it is very hard to surprise Anton and any such attempt must be made with a -4 penalty.

Since he is not undead Anton is immune to most things that normally affect other vampires and he can not be turned. However, his eyes are so sensitive to light that if he is exposed to any bright light he gets a -3 penalty to all rolls and suffers 1d6 points of damage for every 3 rounds of exposure as is the case with his hearing. If Anton is exposed to loud noises he gets a penalty to all rolls (the DM should decide about the penalty according to the amount of noise).

Anton's madness protects him from the influence of mind-controlling spells or abilities, and his amulet give him a 30% resistance to all other spells. Furthermore the amulet coats Anton with a magical field so the only way to hit him is with a +1 or better weapon. Finally, whenever Anton has only 1 hit point he uses one the amulet's abilities to transform into a cloud of mist, and then flees from battle to his hideout.

## Adventure Outline

In the past few months since his arrival Anton was lucky enough not to encounter any member of the Renier family. However, his luck has chanced two nights before the adventure begins, when he attacked Louise Renier. Only thanks to her true nature did Louise manage to survive. During the attack Louise spotted the amulet and since she is trained to recognize power for all her life, recognized it as an item of power. The heroes should have at least one +1 weapon or better, and a mage or a cleric can be in the group, though they are not necessary. (Unless you want to make the fight more exciting.)

The adventure begins when the adventurers are being hired by Louise which hope to use them in order to retrieve her “stolen” amulet (and hopefully to get rid of Anton). Still weak from the loss of blood, the cunning Louise hopes to use the heroes as a distraction while she will be able to remove the amulet from Anton.

The heroes should make some research in order to discover that the attack is one of many attacks committed by a monstrous murderer. Some clues should indicate upon the tower on a hill near the city as the murderer’s hideout, and the heroes should reach to the conclusion that they are dealing with a vampire. The heroes should get to the tower near sundown and to face Anton. (When the heroes see Anton for the first time, they should make fear or horror checks). During the fight Louise will make an appearance in her hybrid form, using the first chance she’s got to get the amulet. Whether she succeeds or fails and unless Anton dies, he run away from battle using his supersonic shriek.

If Anton survives, he might seek revenge upon the heroes, leaving Pont-a-Museau, and following them to everywhere they go.

# ANGELIQUE MOLIÈRE

by "Liederick"

Lo underneath her scornfull feete, was layne  
 A dreadfull D ragon with an hideous trayne,  
 And in her hand she held a mirrhour bright,  
 Wherein her face she often vewed fayne,  
 And in her selfe-lov'd semblance tooke delight;  
 F or she was wondrous faire, as any living wight.

Edmund Spenser

*The Faerie Queene Book I, Canto IV (1596)*

## Biography

For centuries, people have tried in vain to hold back the years, to stave off the effects of old age, hoping to find the ultimate answer to eternal youth and beauty.

Sometimes, this desire may find its own way.

The dark powers might easily grant the wisher that which she most desires, though always at a price much higher than initially bargained for. Angelique Molière paid the price for her vanity, and she now spreads the darkness throughout the demiplane of dread.

## Appearance

Angelique is a woman of stunning beauty; a dark-haired, brown-eyed woman in her late twenties. When she wants to impress and revel in the adoration of her consorts, she dresses in elegant, silk robes and fine jewelry. More often, she carries her hair in a ponytail and wears a sleeveless jacket, a blooming shirt and ochre leather trousers, all of which accent her fine figure, while not impeding her while she spends her time on one of her many hobbies: horseback riding.

## Background

Angelique was born the daughter of Arend Molière and Henriette Ravy, the owners of the inn *The Rapier and the Rose*, in what was then known as Dorvinia. Angelique was a pretty girl, true enough, but her bad temper and jealous nature quickly alienated her from

## Angelique Molière

**0-level human, Neutral Evil**

<b>Armor Class</b>	10	<b>Str</b>	8
<b>Movement</b>	12	<b>Dex</b>	14
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	0	<b>Con</b>	11
<b>Hit Points</b>	6	<b>Int</b>	12
<b>THAC0</b>	20	<b>Wis</b>	13
<b>Morale</b>	7	<b>Chr</b>	17
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	1	<b>XP</b>	175
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	By weapon		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	Regeneration		
<b>Magic Resistance</b>	25%		

most other children. She soon became bitter, blaming others for her own shortcomings.

While her father would have liked her to take over the family business, Angelique had no compulsion to become a "mere servant girl." She was determined to leave the small village where her parents lived, and become an actress, which she thought should be easy for someone with her good looks.

When a young wandering artist named Kain came to town to create a painting for the village elder, Angelique decided this was her chance to see the world. She used all her charms to beguile the handsome young man and convince him to take her with him when he left again.

Kain had no plans in that direction, but he was at first amused, and later intrigued, by both the girl's arrogance and her almost-supernatural beauty, and he promised he would make her a portrait that would make her immortal.

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

For days he worked, using all his skill, his best paints and canvas, on what would surely be a masterpiece.

When it was finally finished, he invited Angelique to the attic of the inn, where he had taken up residence. There he revealed the canvas to Angelique.

It was magnificent. Every hair was in place, the colors of her eyes shone out of the canvas as if they were watching your every move, and her dress was painted so lively that it seemed to move on the canvas.

But in the eyes, the chin, and the nose, it also showed Angelique's haughty attitude and vanity.

In short, while the woman in the portrait was beautiful, she was almost chilling to behold.

Angelique fumed. "This is not what I look like!" yelled Angelique. "I am pretty, elegant! Not..." She turned to look at the painting, "not as cold as that! Fix it now!"

But Kain curtly responded that he had only painted what he had seen.

"I do not paint compassion when it is not there, nor can I leave out vanity when that is all I see. A portrait to make you immortal. Oh, how true that is. This painting will be fresh and beautiful even when you are old and withered. Maybe by then you will also have learned the meaning of compassion and love, though I doubt it."

Yelling with rage, Angelique grabbed the portrait and kicked it over. It fell in an unfortunate arc, hitting the artist's head on its way down. Kain toppled backward, his face bleeding.

Half conscious, his eyes filled with blood flowing from his forehead, he reached out to Angelique for help.

But the girl had no intention of helping him. She watched calmly how the last life ebbed away from the artist's body, then turned to straighten her portrait. It was, after all, a masterpiece, and even though it showed her in an uncomplimentary way, she was still beautiful.

"A portrait to make me immortal," she sighed. "How I wish it would be the other way around. I do not want to grow old and die. Why cannot this pale reflection age, while I stay young and beautiful?"

So musing, a strange chilly wind blew through the artist's attic.

Startled, Angelique suddenly realized what she had done, and who they would all blame... her!

Turning around, she ran off down the stairs. In the confusion, she slipped, and fell headlong down the stairs, bumping her head on the rough surface of the wooden banister. "My face..." was all she could think before she passed out.

When Angelique woke, she found herself in her bed.

Kain, she learned, had suffered a terrible accident, being hit by one of his own paintings. She had been found at the bottom of the stairs, in shock. The villagers

presumed she had fallen down the stairs after finding the artist's body.

Angelique quickly felt her face, but she felt no bruises or injuries, though she was sure she had felt the shaving of wood.

That night, when all was still, Angelique crept up to the attic, sensing a strange foreboding. There, at the end of the low room, hung the portrait, covered with a cloth. She stood for ages, looking at the white sheet, before she finally managed to pull it away.

The portrait was still there, as cold and beautiful as it had been before.

Except for a large bruise on the cheekbone where she had hit the banister the night before.

## Personality

Angelique has spent over fifty years of her unnatural life moving from place to place, hiding the truth from preening eyes. She has come to learn a lot about her condition.

Almost anything that would affect her body, be it old age, wounds, or magical transformations, affects her portrait instead. This makes her very confident of herself.

The downside of it all is that every time she looks upon herself, be it a sketch or a reflection in a pool, the image shifts to represent the hideous, malformed body of the portrait. Only Angelique is witness to the change, but she cannot bear the sight, so she avoids all mirrors or reflective surfaces if possible.

Years of moving around has left Angelique distrustful of people, and very paranoid.

While she likes to go out, attend the parties to which she is invited, and take lovers, she never confides in anyone, nor does she start long-term relationships, for fear that people will delve into her past or notice that she does not age.

Instead, she moves from one city to the other, amusing herself with the adoration she gets from the young men that attend to her every need, taking what she wants, then moving on.

Angelique is also very vain and demands attention, or she will turn nasty.

She will not hesitate to manipulate events so they will turn out in her favor, disregarding other people's emotions. Should she meet with a rival of equal or higher beauty than hers (at least according to Angelique), she will ruthlessly have the woman pursued by some hired band of thugs, till her rival is either dead or, preferably, mutilated.

Should anyone try to probe into her past, she will turn exceptionally paranoid, and use all means at her disposal to prevent the truth from coming out.

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

## Combat

Angelique prefers not to fight, but if she is forced to, she will defend herself with her whip, which she will aim at other people's faces, causing vicious scars.

She will normally rely upon her current lovers to protect her, most of whom will instantly jump to the occasion to prove their worth to her.

Should she be wounded in battle, however, the damage will instantly regenerate, the wound instead being transferred to the portrait, which will grow uglier with each stroke. This makes her exceptionally hard to kill, though it is not impossible.

In short, any attack (magical, poison, or otherwise) which causes damage (in the form of loss of hit points) simply fails to kill her.

Poison which depends on causing hit point loss does not kill her, but instantly fatal poisons might (such as types F, O, and P). Most magical spells which affect matter or which cause damage in any way (including *polymorph other*, *disintegrate* and *finger of death*) are ineffective. *Power word, kill* is effective, however, as is a *death* spell. PCs may find other ways of killing Angelique without causing her hit point damage (frightening her to death, maybe), so the DM's discretion is advised here.

The only other way to kill Angelique is to destroy the portrait. The canvas is very strong and can not be destroyed by mundane means, though normal fire and blades will cause minor scratches and burns to the canvas, simultaneously causing excruciating (but not damaging) pain to Angelique.

Any enchanted weapons, as well as magical fire and damaging spells do have effect. These means, when directed at the portrait, cause immediate and permanent damage to Angelique. Only a *mending* spell cast at the portrait will restore hit points lost this way.

When all her hit points are lost in this manner, Angelique dies. Upon her death, she will take on the hideous form of the portrait, possibly causing a horror check for any onlooker of the ghastly transformation.

At the same time, the portrait will be restored to its former self, henceforth showing the original image of Angelique, beautiful once more.

This adventure was written to be used by any group of characters, regardless of level.

It is primarily a game of intrigue, and combat is less important (though it can be easily introduced if desired).

The adventure takes place in Port-a-Lucine, in the domain of Dementlieu, and even involves a brush with that domain's darklord, Dominic d'Honaire.

## Background

After she caused some mayor embarrassment to Ivana Boritsi in a party thrown by the darklord of Borca, Angelique had to flee for Dementlieu. Ivana was very vexed when she found out that simply closing the poisonous borders of the domain had no effect on Angelique: the poison that would normally have killed her only affected her portrait.

Furious, Ivana sent out an assassin to finish the work. The man might have had succeeded, had it not been for the interference of the Living Brain of von Aubrecker.

Using his agents, the Brain offered Angelique his protection, and she readily agreed, even though she was not aware of the true nature of her new ally. Soon enough, the gendarmes of Chateaufaux found the body of the dead Borcan agent floating down the river.

Since then, the Brain has tried to get Angelique to infiltrate the aristocracy in Dementlieu.

During one of the parties thrown just for this attempt, Angelique drew the attention of Dominic d'Honaire. Dominic was immediately smitten with the woman.

Initially Angelique felt only the greatest revulsion for the man (the effect of Dominic's curse), but the Brain eventually convinced her to overcome her aversion and let the man woo her.

As the adventurers enter the scene, they are asked by a man (Dominic in disguise) to deliver a message to Angelique. Initially, they become part in what seems to be a romance.

As the story progresses, the heroes may uncover a plot to murder Dominic's wife, as well as the truth behind Angelique.

## The Adventure Begins

It is late at night when the adventure starts. The adventurers are staying or have just arrived in Port-a-Lucine.

When wandering through town at night, they have the following encounter:

# VANITY



# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

You stumble upon an empty square with a small fountain in the center. All is still, and for a moment you have the feeling you are utterly alone.

Then you hear a sigh—and in the shadow of the fountain, you see a man sitting on the edge of the pool.

He seems nervous, twisting his handkerchief. As you approach, he jumps up, gazes expectantly at you, then sags.

“She didn’t send you, did she? No, I guess she didn’t.”

He flops down on the fountain’s rim.

“It always goes this way.”

The man is Dominic d’Honaire, who is supposed to meet Angelique here.

Angelique, however, changed her mind, deciding to play with the man a bit before ‘giving in’ to his charms.

Dominic appears as a very downcast and slightly pathetic man. If the characters ask what is wrong, he will relate to them a story of how he met a beautiful woman and fell madly in love with her. If they do not ask, he will start up a conversation with them and tell them anyway.

The darklord will simply introduce himself as “Dominic.” Native player characters who know people in the aristocracy (or are nobles themselves) may know Dominic d’Honaire as the head of lord-governor Guignol’s advisory counsel.

If they recognize him and confront him with the fact that he is married, Dominic will tell a sad tale about the unhappiness of his marriage—remember, Dominic is a mesmerist and very convincing.

Dominic admits that he has been rejected a few times, and now that his date did not appear on this date, he is afraid to be spurned again.

Giving in to a thought, he asks the party to take a message to the lady in question (having no nerve to do this himself). He will offer a reward to the heroes, if necessary.

If the party agrees, he will give them directions to the house of Angelique Molière in the merchant district, and agrees to wait for them in *La Confidentiale*, a coffee house in the government quarter.

## The Rival

Angelique’s house lies close to the harbor. When they arrive, the heroes are greeted at the door by Eduard Lumpin, Angelique’s personal butler, and a servant of the Living Brain.

If the party tells him they come to relate a message from Dominic, he will let them in, and Angelique will greet them.

You are led to a warm and comfortable room, which seems to have once been a dining room.

On the wall at one end of the room hangs a large tapestry, displaying a band of horses running across wide grasslands.

Sketches and drawings are scattered on a large table, and in one corner is an easel with the half-finished painting of a horse’s head.

A woman at the table, apparently studying the sketches, looks up at you.

She is stunningly beautiful, her dark hair falling to her shoulders, and deep brown eyes in whose darkness you could drown. She moves gracefully, like in a dream, and as she smiles at you with her full lips, a pleasant warmth fills you.

You snap out of your reverie, realizing she’s said something.

Angelique has been trying to get some feel of art, and is now studying some sketches one of her former lovers left her. She is mainly interested in horses, so her artistic ability does not stretch very far.

The tapestry hides a big mirror which is mounted on that wall. Angelique cannot bear the sight of her reflection, and thus has covered it.

Angelique excuses herself for not arriving at the meeting point, claiming a bad cold forced her to stay inside. She will arrange a meeting for the next night, asking the party to escort her admirer to her house.

After their first impression, Angelique may appear quite aloof to the heroes, however, so the party may have some mixed feelings about her when they leave. On the other hand, Angelique may well choose to flirt with one of the PCs (or with several, playing them against each other), adding a bit of rivalry and jealousy to the game.

Once the PCs set out to convey the new date to their new patron, they are spotted by René Lamouche.

This pampered merchant’s son has had a crush for Angelique for some time now, and is convinced they are meant for each other. Angelique, of course, has no such feelings.

As the party leaves the house, René steps out of the shadows.

A young man jumps out of an alley in front of you. His eyes flicker angrily, and his hand shakes as he points his finger at you.

“I know what you are up to!” he shouts. “But you better not stand in my way!”

Several angry shouts from the windows of houses around you call for silence, but the boy does not seem to listen. He jumps out at you, pushes you, then jumps back and screams “Get out of here!”

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

Whatever message he is actually trying to get across is not very clear...

If the heroes start a fight, René will run away, as it soon becomes apparent he is in the minority.

If they ask what his problem is, he shouts that they are trying to take Angelique from him. He then bluntly accuses the male hero with the highest Charisma of being Angelique's lover. Denials from the party are met with scorn—he shouts at the heroes, but leaves as soon as the party resorts to violence.

Otherwise, he will keep insulting them until a few of Port-a-Lucine's guards come over to see what is going on. Having a bad reputation with the watch as a trouble maker, René runs off before he can get into more trouble, leaving the party to explain matters.

Once the party returns safely to *La Confidentiale* and relates the new arrangements, Dominic is overjoyed. He seems to have no interest in the potential rival, assuring them there is nothing that cannot be arranged.

He will agree to meet the heroes at the coffee house the following evening.

## A Date to Remember

After meeting up with each other, the heroes and Dominic arrive at Angelique's house the next night. Eduard will let them in, ushering Dominic into the lobby while leading the PCs to another room, where Angelique awaits them.

She thanks them for their assistance, offering them some wine while she prepares to meet with her admirer.

The wine contains some of the poison Angelique has been instructed to use on Dominic's wife. It is type J poison, which she obtained during her flight from Borca (type L or M could be used for weaker parties). She plans to test it on the player characters, since she is not sure how it will act.

As the characters prepare to drink, René bursts in. In anger, he slaps the drinks out of the hands of the heroes, calling them liars and acting very much like a spoiled brat. The heroes will have to spend some time assuring him they are not secret lovers (Angelique is no help here), but René will not choose to pick a fight now.

If the heroes can not calm René down, Angelique throws up her arms in the air, saying she has no time for this pathetic game. She then quickly leaves, reassuring everyone she'll be back later.

She expects the wine will kill off the players anyway, but does not want to lose her grip on Dominic, so she hurries to meet the darklord.

Once Angelique is gone, René calms down. He regards you with utmost contempt.

"You have no business here," he says. "Angelique and I, we are in love. You will soon see the truth of that."

With those words, he gulps down a glass of wine. For a moment he stares you confidently in the eye. Then his face turns white.

"What... what have you given me to drink?... I..." His hands fly to his throat, and appears to start suffocating. The glass falls from his hands, shattering on the floor.

Slowly, he drops to his knees, turning his face—now almost blue—up questioningly to you.

His eyes roll back, and then he topples forward, dead.

By now the heroes should be aware that Angelique was attempting to poison them (it was their wine René was drinking).

The most probable deduction is that Angelique plans to use the poison on Dominic. (She actually plans to use it on Dominic's wife, thus becoming the only woman in his life and enhancing her influence over him).

The heroes now have the opportunity to search Angelique's house, trying to find her and save Dominic.

## Confronting Angelique

As the PCs investigate the house, they may happen upon Angelique's painting. It is in one of the lesser-used rooms, covered by a white cloth. The room is normally locked, but Angelique was in a hurry to retrieve her Borcan poison from the desk in the room, and forgot to lock the door on her way out.

Should any of the heroes pull away the cover (or if a PC accidentally brushes against the painting), relate the following :

The painting's cover slowly slides from its frame, dropping to the floor.

Revealed is a portrait of a most horrendous visage. Barely recognizable as a woman, the face of the portrait is wrinkled with age, and yellowed as if she was sick. Black splotches cover her face, her cheek lies open, exposing bone, and a deep gash cuts into her neck.

As you look closer, you have the nagging feeling you have seen this person before, though you can't remember when or where.

At this moment, Angelique may burst in, having been warned of the heroes' intrusion by her servants.

Alternatively, the PCs may seek her out, and confront her with what they know or have deduced.

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

Should a fight break out, any servants present will instantly leap to the defense. Dominic, if present, will not engage in combat, but he might try to *dominate* the PCs, willing them to stop fighting.

Moreover, in any combat the PCs will instantly notice that no harm can be done to Angelique. PCs who keep an eye on the portrait, however, will notice fresh wounds appearing on the painting.

Dominic will realize there is something wrong when he witnesses one of Angelique's mortal wounds regenerating. He will instantly stop his interference with the PCs. Instead he loses his courage and flees the mansion. Alternatively, if the party is doing very poorly, he will turn his mesmerizing powers to the servants, giving the PCs some relief. If he tries this on Eduard, he will notice the influence of another mind—thus making him aware of the presence of the Living Brain.

If and when the PCs strike the painting, read the following:

As the painting is pierced, Angelique collapses, crying out in agony. She falls down on the floor, a dark puddle of blood spreading from her side.

Suddenly, the painting emits a blinding flash, basking everyone in a halo of bright light.

As your eyes adjust, you are shocked to see the face of Angelique looking down on you in a triumphant smile. Then you realize that what you are looking at is the portrait. Looking down, you see the nightmarish woman of the portrait lying at your feet.

Angelique Molière is no more.

## Conclusion

Once the characters reveal Angelique's true nature, Dominic realizes his folly, and immediately starts inquiries.

However, he does not wish his folly to become known to the populace (even less so his enemies), and after a few days invites the characters to his home. He thanks them profoundly, and offers them a reward: an estate south of Chateaufaux, near the Richemulot border.

The house originally belonged to an aristocratic family, but the last of that family died several years ago, and the estate has been empty ever since. It is also haunted, but he will not reveal this to the characters (the estate may be the Joson estate from *Children of the Night: Ghosts*). Dominic wants the characters to leave Port-a-Lucine as quickly as possible.

If they either captured or killed Angelique, he asks them to return her or her body to Sturben in Borca, to the country house of lady Emiralda Cansate, an ermordenung in the service of Ivana Boritsi.

Dominic will use a *suggestion* if the heroes do not show any sign of wanting to leave the city, but if they are not affected by that, he will not insist any further. However, later that night, a band of hired thugs will then try to subdue the characters.

If the heroes lose this battle, they will awake onboard a ship heading for Ludendorf in Lamordia.

## Recurrence

- ◆ If Angelique got away, she will initially flee to Lamordia, where she soon picks up her extravagant lifestyle again. If the characters discovered her secret, she will try to find a way to rid herself of them, preferably by sending assassins. If Angelique was prevented from taking her portrait with her, Dominic will claim it and hang it in the gallery of his estate. After a week, the portrait mysteriously disappears, swallowed by the Mists and returned to Angelique's possession (if the player characters have it, they will find it gone after a few days).

- ◆ If the characters captured Angelique, Dominic will have her returned to Borca, hoping to gain some favor with Ivana Boritsi, though he will try to keep the portrait.

If the characters do not want to escort her, he will order someone else to do this. In that event, Angelique may escape and appear again later in the campaign.

- ◆ Should the characters succeed in killing Angelique, they may have made an enemy for life in the Living Brain. This highly intelligent villain will certainly take the heroes into account next time he plans a scheme.

Since he has the time, he will not immediately take revenge, but as long as the heroes stay in Dementlieu, the Brain will take steps to make their life uncomfortable. Dominic, on the other hand, may try to use the heroes to find a way to expose the mastermind who has eluded him so long.

In theory, any adventure the DM runs from that moment on may or may not be part of a bigger scheme, orchestrated by either schemer.

Of course, the characters may never grasp the greater plan at all...

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

## MARSAL ULOK

by Marco A. Torres

Each kind of life hath with him his disease.

Sir Thomas Wyatt

*Of the Mean and Sure Estate Written to John Pains (1557)*

### Biography

The search for wealth and power is full of dangers. There are those who are not careful and quickly fall to these dangers, long before they reach their goal. Then there are those who are too careful, and abandon their quest out of fear. And finally, there are those few who do reach their goal. These are the most frightening of men, for they are willing to sacrifice anything, even their bodies, for material possession that will not last and fame among those whom they do not know.

### Appearance

Marsal's appearance varies greatly, depending upon the wealth of his last victim. He can be found in anything from the dirtiest rags to the most regal attire. Regardless of the outfit, however, he always wears gloves. He appears quite healthy, an ironic twist of fate. He has light brown hair, piercing blue eyes, and a smile that could charm the most cold-hearted of women.

### Marsal Ulok

5<sup>th</sup>-level Human Thief, Neutral Evil

<b>Armor Class</b>	6	<b>Str</b>	11
<b>Movement</b>	12	<b>Dex</b>	15
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	5	<b>Con</b>	20
<b>Hit Points</b>	24	<b>Int</b>	13
<b>THAC0</b>	18	<b>Wis</b>	12
<b>Morale</b>	12	<b>Cha</b>	15
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	1	<b>XP</b>	5,000
<b>Damage/attack</b>	By weapon		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Disease		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	Disease Immunity		
<b>Magic Resistance</b>	45% (vs. magical disease only)		

### Background

Marsal Ulok was born the son of a poor merchant in Nosos. Business was horrible for his father, and the family quickly declined down the social ladder. Once he was old enough to survive on his own, Marsal left home and began to steal in order to survive. Life among the poor and diseased exposed Marsal to a number of diseases, all of which his immune system quickly fought off. This overexposure to diseases ended up causing Marsal's already strong immune system to become even stronger and more effective. When Marsal discovered he was capable of withstanding any disease, he began to hide out among the most disgusting and wretched areas of the city. Thus, his fellow thieves and outcasts gave him the nickname Muck.

One day, while breaking into the house of one of the upper-class citizens, Marsal discovered an invitation to a masquerade ball. According to the invitation, all upper-class citizens would be invited. Seeing the opportunity to infiltrate high society and make some money, Marsal took the invitation, along with some jewelry and clothing, and fled. For the next few days, Marsal prepared himself for what would be the greatest heist of his life. He was going to rob the upper-class blind right before their very eyes! Using the clothing he had stolen, as well as a mask he had found during one of his burglaries, Marsal headed to the ball.

The night was incredible. Marsal talked politics with the men, and charmed all the ladies with his jokes and smile. No one suspected that the man they were all conferring with was in fact one of the impoverished whom they hired for work and made fun of on a regular basis. While distracting the snobs with his wit and charm, he managed to pilfer numerous rings, bracelets, and coin purses. Everything was going perfectly. That is, everything was going perfectly until he met Malus Sceleris.

Near the end of the night, Marsal's audience turned their attention to the guest of the evening: Malus Sceleris.

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

Malus conversed with the nobles, joking with the gentlemen and charming the ladies, much as Marsal had. Marsal's heart was beating quickly. If he were to rob Malus Sceleris at one of his parties, he would forever be remembered. Marsal joined the conversation, in hopes of distracting the Malus long enough to snatch his money and any other items of value. It all seemed to work, and Marsal quickly left the conversation to resume his work on other guests. However, as the ball drew to a close, Marsal was approached by Sceleris. He came extremely close to him, and then whispered into Marsal's ear, "Hope you enjoy the items. They are a gift." With that, the man left the ball.

Marsal quickly learned what was meant by Malus' words. The next day, as he showed off his newfound treasures to his friends, two of them became gravely ill. Lesions began to appear on their skin within minutes of making contact with Marsal, and one began to vomit. Frightened, the rest of the group ran away. Marsal was horrified by what had happened. He fled back to his makeshift home, where he began to think clearly. As he thought more and more about what had happened, he remembered the words from Malus. He had to know what was happening; he had to be responsible. That night, he donned his mask again and headed for the latest party.

Upon handing his coat to the servant at the door, the man became feverish, and had to retire back to his room. This frightened some of the nobles, but the party continued as normal. Marsal tried to avoid contact with anyone, and stood at the back of the room, just waiting for Malus to join the ball. Near the end of the night, he saw the crowd form once again. Malus Sceleris had returned. Marsal waited until the end of the night to speak with him.

Upon approaching him, Malus smiled wickedly at Marsal. He approached him and, after Marsal finished cursing and threatening him, revealed what had happened. He explained that the items which were stolen contained a new disease he had created. It would forever remain dormant in Marsal due to his immune system, but anyone who made contact with his skin would become infected. He then revealed the most horrifying fact: there was no cure. Marsal would become an outcast forever, for anyone who touched him would die within a matter of days. With that, Malus unmasked himself and left the party, laughing hysterically.

Recently, Marsal has left Nosos and now wanders the core. He has come to make the disease work for him, as it is far easier to steal from a weak, sick man than it is to steal from a healthy one. His appearance varies, depending on the wealth of his latest victim. If it was someone poor, than he can be found wearing rags, and he appears a bit dirty. If the victim was wealthy, then he

will be found in whatever clothes best suit such wealth. For the most part, Marsal wanders from domain to domain, looking for whatever means to survive.

## Personality

Marsal is a deceptive and sly foe. He has come to understand the nature of his disease, and is able to keep it under check by wearing gloves and a hood. He tends to pose as a healthy man, winning people over with his good looks and hypnotic voice. He tends to charm women, seducing them, and makes them sign over their possessions to him. At that point, he will remove whatever protection he has and infect the victim with his disease, causing her to die quickly. After that, he inherits the wealth and moves on to another victim.

## Combat

Marsal avoids combat, preferring to befriend his enemies, and then infecting them when they least expect. If forced into battle, however, he carries a short sword which he is very skilled at using. Marsal's disease is very dangerous. Anyone he touches must make a successful Constitution check at a -2 penalty or else become infected. Within five minutes of contact, the effects will begin to show. Another Con check must then be made, at a -1 penalty. If successful, then the victim only has a fever for a few days and feels very weak. If the check fails, the victim takes 1d4 points of damage instantly. Lesions appear on his skin, and each day, the victim must make another check or take another 1d4 permanent points of damage. A *cure disease* spell may destroy the infection, but it has a 65% chance of failure. A *limited wish* or *wish* spell will stop the disease. There is also a natural remedy. Despite what Malus Sceleris said, he does have a cure. However, only Malus knows it.

Marsal's immune system is so well developed that any natural disease is instantly repelled. It is also capable of fighting off magical diseases. Should anyone attempt such a thing, Marsal has a 45% chance of fighting it off.

## Adventure Ideas

- ◆ Marsal takes time with his enemies, befriending them before striking. He may befriend a wealthy group of PCs over the course of several adventures, and when they least expect it, he will infect one. The infection will then spread amongst the rest of the group, forcing them to find a cure and think twice about who they befriend.
- ◆ The PCs are called to investigate the spreading of a disease among the nobility of a city. Many suspect magic is at work. The truth: Marsal infected a young lady, who then caused it to spread. The PCs must find a cure, or risk the horrible deaths of a whole city.

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

## MARIE ANNETTE

by Marco A. Torres

If you do not tell the truth about yourself you cannot tell it about other people.

**Virginia Woolf (1882-1941)**

### Biography

An untruth is a powerful thing. It can condemn an innocent man, protect a dear friend, or destroy a nation. Lying gives the liar incredible power. As is often the case with power, however, it also brings corruption. And nothing short of the truth can redeem a corrupted liar. In the Land of Mists, the children of Odiare know this all too well.

### Appearance

Marie is very lovely, with long, red hair and large, blue eyes and small, red lips. She is tall, and slightly thin, and appears very fragile. Her hands and feet are very small, and it is amazing that she can do anything with them.

### Marie Annette

**Madman, Chaotic Neutral**

<b>Armor Class</b>	4 (10)	<b>Str</b>	13 (5)
<b>Movement</b>	12	<b>Dex</b>	16 (8)
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	2	<b>Con</b>	15 (8)
<b>Hit Points</b>	16 (8)	<b>Int</b>	10
<b>THAC0</b>	15	<b>Wis</b>	12
<b>Morale</b>	12(7)	<b>Chr</b>	14
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	1		
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	See below		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Hug		
<b>Magic Resistance</b>	Nil		
<b>XP Value</b>	3,000 for lifting the curse 0 for killing Marie		

Numbers in parentheses reflect Marie when in her confused state.

### Background

Marie was born to parents of French descent in the village of Odiare in Gothic Italy. She was only one year old when Maligno ordered the puppets of Odiare to murder all the adults of the town, causing the Mists of

Ravenloft to claim the village, and therefore she never truly knew her parents. However, the loss left an emotional gap in her that she was never able to fill. As she grew older, she became known as the entertainer of the town, for she tried to fill her loss with instant amusement. She always appeared happy, and tried to look on the bright side of things. Unfortunately, she was also rather lazy and often didn't do her assigned chores. Since she was so young though, she was not punished, and thus continued to lead a happy life.

Upon recently reaching her thirteenth birthday, however, the older children decided that she was old enough to be punished. They agreed that if she denied her duties once again, she would be locked in a basement. She thought nothing of this, believing them to be too spineless to do such a thing. Thus, she continued to ignore her chores, and go about her merry life. Angered, the older children took her from her home and questioned her. Afraid of what might happen to her in the basements, she lied and told them that an older child had kept her from doing her chores, even though she had pleaded with him to let her do her work. The boy she accused had been known for causing trouble, and so the older children believed her and placed the boy in the basements. Marie realized that by lying, she could get out of doing all her work. Each time she was questioned, she made up a lie about how someone else had prevented her from doing her work, or told her she didn't have to do it. For the first few times, she was believed, and others were punished in her place, a few nearly being driven to death by fear in the basements, and at least one suffered from temporary insanity.

Eventually, though, the children decided that not everyone could be out to get Marie, so they watched her closely. They saw that it was her fault the work didn't get done, and so they caught and locked her in one of the basements. While there, she came to the conclusion that the others didn't want her in their village, so she decided that she would not return. When the older children came to release her, she hid and they assumed she had been killed by one of the puppets. Saddened by her loss, they locked the basement and left.

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

As time went on, Marie began to become very frightened. She recalled the stories of the evil dolls which lurked in the basements, and hunger was also getting to her. Her fear, isolation, and hunger slowly began to drive her insane. Extremely frightened, the young girl cried herself to sleep.

When Marie awoke the next day, she found a group of carrionettes surrounding her. She was so frightened that she could not speak, not even scream. As she waited there, frozen, the puppets walked away and left. They had assumed the young girl was dead, for she had made no movement, nor any sound, and the carrionettes had no need for a dead body. Marie, however, thought differently. In her shattered mind, she began to rationalize why they left her. She came to the conclusion that she was a doll herself. That was why the puppets did not harm her. That was why she had survived so long without food. And most importantly, that was why she had been locked away by the other children. The dark powers, already aware of her evil potential because of her destructive lies, took notice of this and, seeing potential for a new “toy,” decided to ‘help’ the girl. They granted her the abilities of a doll golem, and gave her the knowledge of this, causing her to believe her own lie. She soon broke out of her prison, and left to seek out the leader of the dolls.

Marie recently met with Guiseppe, and has chosen him to become her ‘father.’ He enjoys her company very much, and has begun to see her as his daughter. Neither she nor Maligno know of each other, for Guiseppe fears what Maligno might do to him or his ‘daughter.’ In fact, Guiseppe is trying to convince Marie to leave him, hoping it will be the best way to keep her safe. However, Maligno is beginning to suspect that his father is hiding something, and the two may soon confront each other.

## Personality

Marie’s mind has been shattered by her ordeal, and she truly believes herself to be a doll. She does, however, still retain her cheerful nature, and still thinks and acts like a child.

Although she never truly became attached to her parents, Marie did feel a loss for never getting to know them. She was just very good at hiding this. Now that her mind has shattered, she believes herself to be a doll. As a doll, of course, she would have no parents, yet the dark powers left her with a yearning for them. Thus, she will subconsciously attach herself to any old person, in an effort to regain her ‘parents.’ However, the dark powers have also seen to it that she loses her parents again as well. She is cursed to lose anyone whom she attaches herself to. This doesn’t necessarily mean they will all die, however. It simply means that any of her

relationships will not be permanent, causing her to forever seek out someone to fill the void in her life.

Her childish nature makes Marie very unstable, and she is very dangerous if ever angered. She also retains her deceitful nature, and is a very good liar. If presented with proof of her human nature, she will become extremely confused, and lose her abilities. She will then revert to a toddler state and cry. Making her truly believe she is human is the only way to break her curse.

## Combat

Marie will generally try to avoid combat with large groups, and instead prefers to split groups up and take them out one by one. Marie has a unique attack. If she makes two consecutive hits on the same character by using only her hands, she may use a special hug attack. Every turn the victim is held, he loses one point of Constitution. Once his Constitution drops to 0, Marie lets go. The victim does not die, but becomes afflicted by a hideous, uncontrollable laughter, and is unable to take any action. Every hour after the victim is released, they regain a point of Constitution and may make a saving throw versus spell to attempt to lose the effect of the laughter. If the check is successful, or if the victim regains all of his Constitution, then the laughter stops, though the victim feels very weak and tired for a while.

## Adventure Ideas

- ◆ A confrontation between Marie and Maligno is certain to occur. Either of them could enlist the aid of the PCs to stop the other from keeping Guiseppe. To make things more interesting, Marie could abduct some of the PCs, pleading for their aid. This would give Maligno the opportunity to get the remaining PCs on his side.
- ◆ While in the Core, the PCs are called to investigate the disappearances of couples. In actuality, Marie has left Odiare, and now seeks to form a new “family” by abducting men and women to become her “parents” or “siblings.”

# LOUIS GIROUME

by Andrew S. Cermak

The face of all the world is changed, I think,  
Since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul  
Move still, oh, still, beside me, as they stole  
Betwixt me and the dreadful outer brink  
Of obvious death, where I, who thought to sink,  
Was caught up into love, and taught the whole  
Of life in a new rhythm.

**Elizabeth Barrett Browning**

*Sonnets From The Portuguese: The Face of All the World (1850)*

## Biography

In the Demiplane of Dread, tragedy is the rule more than the exception. Some of the most dangerous of Ravenloft's creatures did nothing to deserve their fate save die an unexpected and unwarranted death. Louis Giroume is one such creature, different only in his stubborn, futile refusal to accept the existence fate has decreed for him.

## Appearance

In life, Louis was a dark, handsome man, tall (6') with bright, expressive green eyes. In undeath, his looks have vanished. The skin of his face is drawn tight against the skull, and his lips are unnaturally thin and have receded from the gums, which are a nauseating gray. His complexion is pale and unhealthy, with blue veins clearly visible. His hands are similarly deformed. However, Louis is able to temporarily disguise these deformities with his inherent *change self* ability; he will always have gloves and a mask available for wear when this ability is exhausted. Louis' eyes retain their life and expressiveness, and his voice is just as melodic as it was in life; somehow, his decayed lips do not interfere with his ability to speak or sing. His clothing varies to accommodate the situation, but it will always be of the highest quality.

## Louis Giroume

**Atypical Revenant, Chaotic Good / Chaotic Evil**

<b>Armor Class</b>	10	<b>Str</b>	18/76
<b>Movement</b>	12	<b>Dex</b>	14
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	9	<b>Con</b>	18
<b>Hit Points</b>	50	<b>Int</b>	15
<b>THAC0</b>	12	<b>Wis</b>	13
<b>Morale</b>	11*	<b>Chr</b>	18 (5**)
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	3/2	<b>XP</b>	3,000
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	By weapon		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Spell-like abilities, Weapon specialization		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	The facade, +1 weapon to hit, Undead immunities, Spell-like abilities		
<b>Special Vulnerabilities</b>	Turning, Holy water		
<b>Magic Resistance</b>	Undead immunities		
<b>Thieving Skills</b>	PP 15% OL 20% F/RT 10% MS 50% HS 50% DN 20% CW 60% RL 75%		

\* Giroume's Morale rises to Fearless (20) if faced with his murderer.

\*\* If his true appearance is revealed.

## Background

In the year 710, one of the shining stars of the Dementlieu stage was the young Louis Giroume, a talented thespian and singer whose handsome looks,



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captivating personality and melodic voice made him an instant favorite among Dementlieu's social elite, despite Dementlieu's rather crowded theatrical world. His professional success resulted in corresponding social success; he became a fixture of the masquerades, balls and other gala events of Dementlieu's upper crust, and his ready wit and expressive manner served him as well there as on the stage.

It is a common cliché that actors are by necessity shallow and incapable of genuine emotion, that their personalities are as much a facade as their roles. In the case of Louis, this was proven a falsehood. His talent for acting stemmed in part from his uncanny ability to truly "feel" a role; when he laughed on stage it was with genuine amusement, and when he cried the tears were tinged with true sorrow. He was possessed of an unusual yet endearing *joie de vivre* and the unquestionable sincerity of his personality only served to make him more popular.

Given the potent combination of his fame, standing, looks and personality, Giroume could likely have been a romantic of legendary proportions, but his refusal to take matters of the heart so lightly led him to gently turn away most of his pursuers. Louis was so charming and tactful that few departed with broken hearts or injured feelings, but unfortunately one did, and this one proved more than enough.

The Countess de Hautpossiant was a wealthy, beautiful woman, but Louis was not easily swayed by such things. He lightly but firmly declined her advances, and she soon gave up her attempts to seduce him. The damage to her ego, however, was not so easily forgotten.

The Countess, as opposed to Louis, was a very shallow woman, and vengeful besides. She had been widowed the previous year; she had discovered that her husband the Count was philandering, and she poisoned him slowly over several months to avenge her wounded pride. Now Louis had wounded that same pride.

The Countess sent several of her "manservants" to teach young Giroume a lesson in manners. Louis, having just returned to his home following a performance when the brutes surrounded him, was attacked on the street, savagely beaten and stabbed repeatedly, and then left to die. Before leaving, one of the men leaned down, close to Louis' shattered face, and whispered "The Countess sends her regards." As the men ran off, Louis died.

However, this was not the end of Louis Giroume. Louis' willpower and his desire to live in the face of death were strong enough that he was able to return as an unusual form of revenant. Mysteriously, as Louis staggered to his feet, nearly all sign of the savage wounds inflicted on his body vanished, healed by some unknown power. Only his face and hands betrayed his undead nature, as the skin on each drew tight around his bones

and his cold lips drew back in a permanent sneer. Briefly entering his home to don gloves, a theatrical face-mask, and a rapier, Louis easily tracked down the Countess and her men over the next few days, driving the blade of his rapier through each of their hearts. To his lasting confusion, though he had avenged himself on his killers, he was not released from undeath. Deprived of the reason for his existence, yet unable to retreat from that existence, Louis has begun trying desperately to return to the life he once knew and can never know again.

What Louis does not know is that the Countess' death was not the end of her, either. The dark powers, aware of the Countess' evil, did not permit her to exit so easily to the next life. The Countess still exists as a 4<sup>th</sup> magnitude ghost, and it is the continued presence of her spirit in the Demiplane that prevents Louis from resting peacefully.

## Personality

In life Louis made his living by acting; now, his living is itself an act. Though Louis has been undead for 40 years, he is unable to accept that his life can never again be what it was. Thus, Louis travels the Core, settling in large cities and using his rather strange abilities (see Combat) to imitate his living self. Taking a false name and history, and stealing whatever trappings he needs, he infiltrates the social elite of the city, and tries to regain a part of the life he once lived. For a time, Louis is able to forget the horror of his existence by indulging in the cultural and social decadence that he once placed himself above. With his undead nature masked, Louis is an incredibly charming and pleasant man. However, inevitably, his carefully crafted illusion fails, and Louis is forced to flee, filled with even more pain than before. Such is his rage and humiliation when he is discovered, that he has actually left several corpses of those unfortunate enough to have revealed his secret; if he continues along this course, it may not be long before the dark powers take notice... if they haven't already.

Should Louis discover that the Countess still "lives" as a ghost, he will once more be consumed with bringing about her destruction. At the moment, all he feels is an occasional faint tugging in the back of his mind, which is easily dismissed amidst all the turmoil already there.

## Combat

Louis possesses a variety of unusual abilities stemming from his unique state of undeath, the nature of which change depending on his current identity.

Louis' primary ability is his ability to create a *facade* once per week. This ability is somewhat similar to the wizard spell *change self*, though it is much more

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powerful than that simple mage's trick. The effects of the facade are outlined below:

- ◆ The facade, when activated, covers Louis in an illusory disguise that mimics the appearance he had in life; no other appearance is possible. This illusion extends only to Louis himself; his clothing is unchanged when the facade is up, forcing him to steal to complete his disguises.
- ◆ Once activated, the facade lasts until it is either canceled by Louis (although it is difficult to conceive of a situation where he might willingly do this) or somehow broken (see below).
- ◆ Although the facade is illusory, the illusion is perfect, extending to all appropriate senses, including touch. It extends to reflections. It cannot be disbelieved, but it can be magically dispelled as with other illusions, and those immune to illusions will see right through it.
- ◆ The illusion also subtly affects others memories of Louis' actions. For example, though Louis is undead and incapable of eating or drinking, if he is at a party and his facade is active others will believe they have seen him do so sometime during the night. This greatly helps Louis avoid suspicion. The exact effects of this ability are left to the DM, but generally it is safe to say that because of it no one will take seriously an allegation that Louis is less than what he appears to be unless it is forcefully demonstrated.
- ◆ While the facade is active, Louis' alignment is chaotic good. In many ways, he becomes the person he was before he died. He is gallant, charming, and gracious, with a bon vivant outlook and a love for the fine arts. However, Louis may have occasional slips or reversions in attitude, becoming hateful and spiteful without warning over minor issues, and then just as suddenly returning to his charming self. These reversions become more likely the longer he hides behind the facade.

While the facade is active, Louis gains several powerful abilities. He can *charm person* with his gaze, as if he were a vampire, and the target suffers a -5 penalty to their saving throw. Three times a day he can cast *emotion* with his voice (any effect), and can cast *sleep* at will by making a touch attack with his bare hands. All spells are treated as if cast by a 9<sup>th</sup>-level wizard.

The facade may be broken in several ways:

- ◆ If Louis is attacked, the facade is broken. This must be a significant attack; being jostled in a crowd, for example, is insufficient. Because of this, Louis will do whatever he can to avoid combat while the facade

is up; if his natural Charisma is insufficient, he will use his spell abilities to mollify attackers.

- ◆ If an attempt is specifically made by a priest to turn Louis, the facade is broken whether the attempt is successful or not.
- ◆ *Dispel magic* or similar effects cast on Louis will break the facade.
- ◆ Every week after the first, there is a cumulative 5% chance the facade will suddenly fail; it automatically fails after 21 weeks. To Louis' misfortune, most of these failures seem to occur at public events; the DM should choose dramatically appropriate times to make a failure check.

Once the facade is broken, Louis cannot create another until a full week has passed. He will wear a mask and gloves at all times for the duration of this week. While the facade is down, Louis' alignment shifts to Chaotic Evil. Robbed of his illusory life, he will become vengeful and spiteful. If his facade was broken through the actions of another, he will seek to kill that person. Afterwards, he will flee, searching for a new place to rebuild his "life."

Louis gains several useful abilities when the facade is broken. His gaze can cause *confusion* up to 3 times a day. By making a bare-handed touch attack, he can cast *hold person*. He retains the ability to cast *emotion* with his voice. He can also become *invisible* once a day when the facade is down. All effects are as if cast by a 9<sup>th</sup>-level wizard. Note that Louis would never intentionally drop his facade just to gain the use of these abilities.

If engaged in melee, Louis fights as a 9<sup>th</sup>-level fighter. Years of training have given him specialization with the rapier, his weapon of choice. Louis also has the abilities of a 5<sup>th</sup>-level thief, with the following skill allocations: PP 15% OL 20% F/RT 10% MS 50% HS 50% DN 20% CW 60% RL 75%

Louis can only be hurt by +1 or better weapons.

Louis has several weaknesses due to his undead state. He can be turned as a vampire. Holy water causes him 2d4 points of damage. Sunlight has no effect on him, however. If reduced to 0 hit points, he is destroyed.

Note that Louis retains the skills of his former life: acting, singing, musicianship, language, carousing, and others besides.

## Adventure Ideas

Louis is an unusual villain, in that much of the time he is not at all villainous. This presents some interesting situations for exploration in a Ravenloft campaign.

While his facade is up, Louis (remember, he will never use his real name, as it is still remembered by

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some) is a true gentleman, and it is like this that the characters will likely first get to know him. Any time the PCs are in a city with a strong sense of refinement and culture (cities of Dementlieu, Richemulot, Borca and Mordent are all appropriate) Louis may be encountered. He will have begun building a significant reputation as an artist, gentleman and romantic. If any of the PCs fits one of these descriptions, Louis might become a friendly rival of that character. Other than this innocent competition, however, Louis will never be anything but pleasant and gracious.

Eventually, however, the PCs might start to get hints that something is odd about Louis. As time passes, the PCs might notice Louis' increasingly frequent fits of "pique." Louis never reverts directly to violence while his facade is up, for fear of its integrity, but the sudden shift in his behavior should be alarming nonetheless. While experiencing one of these bouts of temper, Louis may even go so far as to hire thugs or set up "accidents" to deal with whomever was the target of his episode. Investigation of such an incident could lead the PCs to Louis.

Louis' charade can also be recognized by his rather odd behavior in certain circumstances. For example, he is very nervous and agitated around priests and mages, because either have the power to destroy his facade. He is also utterly pacifistic, bordering on cowardly; he refuses to engage in physical altercations, no matter what the situation, for fear of his facade. If pressed, he flees. This all in spite of his bold, dashing and chivalrous demeanor, and could lead some observant characters to be suspicious. Any investigation into his claims about his past will reveal them to be utterly fraudulent. Finally, it is only a matter of time before Louis' facade fails on its own.

If confronted by suspicious PCs while his facade is intact he will try to charm his way out of the situation. If he fails, he will flee; he does not want to risk the chance that the heroes may attack him, breaking his facade, and he certainly does not wish to risk being destroyed.

If, however, Louis' facade is broken, confronting him will be an interesting situation. Assuming he has not harmed anyone, Louis will try to convince the PCs that he has not done any harm with his charade; he may have charmed a few souls, but such a minor and temporary offense surely isn't deserving of destruction. If he has killed or otherwise injured anyone, Louis will flee invisibly until cornered, upon which point he will fight, savagely, seeking an opportunity to flee. He will consider the PCs enemies; not only did they ruin his "life," they know his secret. Eventually he may seek to have them killed.

Louis could instead easily be portrayed as a sympathetic character once his facade has been broken; if

the party takes pity on the poor man (an image he will do his best to convey if he feels it is his best means of survival), Louis might be able to enlist their aid in finding some means of returning him to full life, if the DM decides any such means exists (note that he is not at all interested in being put peacefully to rest). Of course, given Louis' nature when the facade is down, he may very well decide to stab the adventurers the second they place their trust in him, as revenge for breaking his disguise; Louis lacks foresight, and momentary satisfaction is often much more important to him than any potential long-term gains.

Another possible adventure is Louis' discovery that the Countess' ghost walks the earth. Louis has no means to destroy a ghost, and he may be driven to seek aid. If the PCs are well-known as monster hunters, they are a logical source of assistance. Louis would approach them with his facade up, inventing some story as to why he needs the ghost destroyed. Should the PCs discover that their employer is himself a monster, their reactions should prove interesting.

As time passes, Louis' tenuous hold on his past self will likely weaken with every failure to return to a normal life. Eventually, he may snap entirely. If this happens, Louis will no longer be Chaotic Good when his facade is up, instead maintaining an evil alignment; at the DM's option, this surrender to evil may result in or come about as the result of failed powers checks, increasing Louis' powers and at the same time worsening his curse. Louis will then become a truly deadly and vicious enemy to any who remind him of the life he has lost., and may arrange the deaths of those of high society around him, all the while maintaining his gallant facade. Discovering the perpetrator of these murders would make an excellent investigative adventure for the PCs, who may become targets themselves.

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## GEDHEM

by "Jack the Reaper"

My brain more busy than the labouring spider  
Weaves tedious snares to trap mine enemies.

William Shakespeare  
2 King Henry VI Act III Scene I

### Biography

Gehdem, known also as the *Rosh Peger* ("Lich's Head"), is a powerful necromancer who lost more than his humanity in his quest for immortality and revenge.

### Appearance

Gehdem is a disembodied, withered head, floating unsupported in the air. He is almost a skull actually, his dry skin pulled tight over his bones. Two brilliant pinpoints of red light burn in his empty eye sockets. Tufts of thin gray hair dwindle from his scalp. A strange, evil looking rune is branded in red on his forehead, glowing with red light every time Gehdem casts spells or uses one of his salient abilities. He wears a golden crown at all times.

### Gehdem

#### Rosh-Peger, Lawful Evil

<b>Armor Class</b>	-2	<b>Str</b>	5
<b>Movement</b>	FL 12 (A)	<b>Dex</b>	13
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	16	<b>Con</b>	N/A
<b>Hit Points</b>	40	<b>Int</b>	19
<b>THACO</b>	15	<b>Wis</b>	18
<b>Morale</b>	17-18	<b>Cha</b>	5
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	1	<b>XP</b>	12,000
<b>Damage/attack</b>	1d6 + Paralyzation		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Spell casting, Aura of cold darkness, Gaze prompts fear checks		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	Immune to mind or life affecting spells, non-magical weapons, cold and electricity		
<b>Special Weaknesses</b>	See below		
<b>Magic Resistance</b>	25%		

### Background

Gehdem was a powerful necromancer-king who ruled a now-forgotten land. After a long reign of tyranny, he was challenged by a powerful group of heroes, and was forced to flee from his kingdom. Gehdem wasn't the forgiving kind, and in his hiding place he started plotting his revenge upon the heroes. He decided that transformation into a lich was the only thing that would make him powerful enough to destroy his enemies, so he started making steps toward this end.

Meanwhile, the powers of good didn't rest on their laurels. They sent groups of adventurers in search for the necromancer, and finally came over his hiding place. The heroes moved in, intending to destroy the evil wizard one and for all. By the time they arrived to his inner sanctuary, Gehdem was just about to re-possess his dead body, which he abandoned 3 days earlier by drinking the poisonous potion of transformation. The heroes, mistaking their enemy for dead, beheaded the body with one axe stroke just to be sure, and left.

Since some of Gehdem's essence was already in the body, a peculiar phenomenon took place; Gehdem was able to re-possess his body—but not all of it. His life essence has been trapped inside his detached skull alone. Gehdem became a Rosh-Peger, the animated head of a lich.

Initially, he was enraged over the loss of his body, but he found that he could still cast spells in his new shape, and he even acquired some new lich powers. Casting a permanent version of *levitate* upon himself, Gehdem floated to his former seat of power and, using his newfound armies and powers, brought a bloody revenge on his enemies.

Floating over the murder scene surrounded by his undead servants, Gehdem failed to notice the mists which had suddenly risen from the bloody soil. When finally he did notice them, it was already too late for him.

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## Personality

Gehdem is a cold, soulless creature, who cares nothing for other beings, and allows nothing to cross his way. He is a calculating genius, always making his plans carefully, considering all factors.

He sees himself superior to all mortals, and to other undead as well. Denied the pleasures of a living body, and even of an intact dead body, Gehdem devotes all his time and energy to research new ways to increase his power.

## Combat

Gehdem can *levitate* at will, using the power of the red rune on his forehead. If an *erase* spell is cast directly on this rune, and he fails a saving throw vs. spells, he will fall to the ground, immobile, for 1d6 rounds.

Gehdem can transfer his life essence into any disembodied head or skull in radius of 10 miles. He can also see and hear through any such a skull without having to transfer his essence into it.

Gehdem has no phylactery; if destroyed, he will possess the closest skull or head within 3 days.

At will, Gehdem can make a spectral, skeletal hand to appear, which enables him to handle objects. He can animate any skull or disembodied head in sight, making it float and bite enemies. There is no known limit to the number of heads he can animate in this fashion. When engaging directly in a combat, which rarely happens, Gehdem uses the spellcasting abilities of a 16<sup>th</sup>-level necromancer. He is cloaked by an aura of cold darkness, and can cause *fear* with his gaze, like all lichs (see *Van Richten's Guide to the Lich*). If he chooses to bite, the victim suffers 1d6 points of damage, and is paralyzed unless succeeds in a saving throw.

Gehdem is immune non-magical weapons; however, he is highly vulnerable to axes. If hit by an enchanted axe on a natural roll of 18 or higher, Gehdem shatters immediately, and he must possess a new skull (which takes him three days). A golden axe striking him has the same effect, even if not enchanted in any way. In order to destroy him permanently, his splinters must be washed in holy water and sealed in a golden vase, no later than six rounds after his shattering. This vase has to be blessed and buried in a cemetery.

## Current Sketch

Gehdem currently resides in a cavern complex filled with floating heads, head hunters and other horrors, under the mountains of Tepest. He seems to have an alliance with the hags who rule the domain, and the evil creatures often seek help from each other. He is not limited to

Tepest, though, and is known to travel to other domains also from time to time; for example, he is known to have recruited in the past groups of undead from the City of the Dead in Keening.

Gehdem's long term goal is to acquire as much power as possible. Secretly, he also craves a full body for himself once again, and is constantly seeking ways to achieve this goal.

## Adventure Ideas

- ◆ Gehdem tries to transfer his 'soul' into the head of one of the PCs, slowly transpossessing him, in an attempt to inhabit a full body once again. PCs must find a way to prevent this.
- ◆ Gehdem wants to become the darklord of Tepest and uses the PCs as pawns for this goal. The hags of course do the same...
- ◆ Gehdem tries to construct an artificial body for himself, and he uses his powers and minions to collect the materials and items required. PCs have to interrupt his minions' activities ( e.g. protect the scroll he wants etc.), as they try to work out who is behind all the schemes.

# ISHMAEL ABD~RABBO

by "Jack the Reaper"

I am a slave, both dumb and blind,  
Upon a journey dread;  
The iron hills lie far behind,  
The seas of mist ahead.

**Wilfred Campbell**  
*The Blind Caravan (1905)*

## Biography

Ishmael abd-Rabbo is a unique form of undead, which deprives his victims of their senses, as was done to him many years ago.

## Appearance

Ishmael is a horrible sight indeed. His face, mercifully covered most of the time by the ragged cloth which wraps him, is rotten and zombie-like; his dark, empty eye sockets, his nose hole, and his mouth all ooze black blood constantly. Under the cloth, his body is dead and decaying, and his long, spider-like arms are almost skeletal. A horrible stench surrounds Ishmael wherever he goes. When stalking his prey, Ishmael fumbles slowly, hunched, swinging his long thin arms in great arches before him. When chasing a "marked" victim, Ishmael advances with strange, monkey-like leaps, his arms held high over his head.

Ishmael never speaks, but he might occasionally groan.

## Background

Ishmael Abd-Rabbo was born in Pharazia. When he was just a child, he was abducted by a traveling slave-trader, and was sold into slavery in the palace of Diamabel, the overlord of the domain. He spent the rest of his life as a personal slave to this dark angel. When he was about 18 years old, he was caught while trying to seduce one of the harem girls. Diamabel declared his punishment: Ishmael would be deprived of all his senses, so that he could never be able to feel any pleasure again.

## Ishmael abd-Rabbo

### Sense Drainer, Neutral Evil

<b>Armor Class</b>	8	<b>Str</b>	16
<b>Movement</b>	12	<b>Dex</b>	11
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	5	<b>Con</b>	—
<b>Hit Points</b>	30	<b>Int</b>	7
<b>THAC0</b>	18 (14*)	<b>Wis</b>	8
<b>Morale</b>	16	<b>Cha</b>	3
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	2	<b>XP</b>	420
<b>Damage/attack</b>	1d4+1 + special		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Sense drain		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	Undead immunities		
<b>Special Weaknesses</b>	See below		
<b>Magic Resistance</b>	Nil		

\* When senses are intact.

Ishmael was taken to an isolated prison-keep in the desert, and there his horrible punishment took place. On the first day, his eyes were gouged out; on the second day, his ears were clipped of his head; on the third day, his nose went the same way; on the fourth day, his tongue was torn out of his mouth; and on the fifth day, his hands were skinned up to the elbows. Then, he was thrown to die in a damp pit in the keep, and was all but forgotten.

A few days later, the guards and jailers of the keep started dying mysteriously. The few who did manage to escape had all become disabled in some way—some were blind, some deaf, and so on. None of them were able to describe what had happened to them in the haunted keep. Several troops of Diamabel's soldiers, who were sent to explore the strange occurrences, have never returned; neither did the black robed nomads who tried to find a shelter in the ruin during a sand-storm.

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The prison-keep has remained abandoned ever since, haunted by the terrible creature who was Ishmael.

## Personality

Being all but detached from the physical world, it is doubtful that Ishmael has ever felt the transition from life to unlife. Existing forever in a dark, silent torment, the shards which remain of Ishmael's mind have little to do with the man he was in life. Now, if he thinks at all, it is only about his torture and the desire to decrease it by draining living creatures of their own senses. Though most of his intelligence is gone, Ishmael still possesses a high degree of animal cunning, which enables him to stalk his victims with great efficiency.

## Combat

Ishmael cannot see, hear, or smell; however, he does possess a strange ability to sense the presence of living beings. The range of this ability is 100 yards when outside of the keep, and all of the keep's area when inside it. He can't detect his victims' exact location, so he fumbles in their general direction and starts groping with his spidery hands until he meets a warm, living body. When he does, he grasps it with a great force, and starts draining senses. If the victim is sleeping or paralyzed in some way, this is done automatically; otherwise, Ishmael attacks normally, twice per round. Every successful hit inflicts 1d4+1 points of damage, and the victim must make a saving throw vs. paralyzation or lose a sense. Roll 1d10 on the table below to determine which sense is drained:

Die roll	Sense Drained
1-2	<b>Sight</b> (victim is blinded: suffers -4 penalty to attack rolls and saving throws, and +4 penalty to AC)
3-4	<b>Hearing</b> (victim becomes deaf: -4 to surprise rolls, 40% chances to mistake when casting spells. If also blind, add another -4 penalty to attack rolls and saving throws)
5-6	<b>Smell</b> (-2 penalty to surprise rolls)
7-8	<b>Taste</b> (no penalty in game terms; cannot identify potions by taste)
9-10	<b>Touch</b> (-4 Dexterity)

If Ishmael hits successfully with both hands in the same round, or when attacking a hapless target, Ishmael secures a grasp on the victim's body and can inflict damage and drain senses automatically, one per round until the victim breaks away with a successful Strength check, dies, or loses all their senses.

Sense loss is permanent, unless cured by magic. A victim who lost all of his senses falls into a catatonic state, not aware in any way of his surroundings. Eventually, he or she will be driven totally insane. Having drained a sense, that sense is restored to Ishmael, who can use it until the next dawn. He will usually possess a sense or two (drained from animals) when the PCs encounter him.

Ishmael usually drains only one victim per night, unless attacked or provoked. A victim who is touched by Ishmael but escapes will become "marked;" Ishmael will be able to sense his exact direction, and will track him all over Pharazia until he manages to drain him or her completely. Ishmael is his own weaknesses; unless using a sense he has drained, he can only sense the presence of living creatures. It is possible to elude him, if a character blocks all of their senses—shutting their eyes, covering their ears, etc. Ishmael will perceive such a person as an inanimate object and thus will not attack. For that reason, unconscious people are also safe from him, but many sleeping victims have woken to the caress of Ishmael's groping hands and made their last mistake by screaming aloud.

Bright lights and loud sounds have a chance to *confuse* Ishmael (as the spell) at the DM's discretion. Ishmael is vulnerable to magical weapons and holy water, and can be turned as a mummy, but only if he can see the holy symbol.

Ishmael will always reform the next night if destroyed, unless killed by the very same sword which took away his senses. It lies resting in the keep's dungeon.

## Current Sketch

Ishmael spends almost all of his time in the prison-keep, unless chasing marked victims over the dunes of Pharazia. He is only active by night; during the day, he nothing more than a heap of bones, cloth and dust. Ishmael is familiar with the keep's structure, and knows how to push his victims toward dead ends and blind corners. He also knows the most likely places for people to sleep or hide, and has set some traps in those places (while using senses he drained).

## Adventure Ideas

The PCs might be commanded by Diamabel to find the source of troubles in the old prison-keep; by discovering the story of Ishmael, they may find out that Diamabel is not the holy angel he claims to be.

Alternatively, the nomads ask them to recover an ancient item which lies in the keep, rumored to have the power to destroy Diamabel: The very arrow which ended Diamabel's mortal life. In this way, Ishmael might be used as a part of a larger-scale campaign against Diamabel. Or the PCs may just find themselves trapped inside the haunted ruin as a sandstorm makes travel outdoors impossible.

# THE GREEN MAN

by Andrew S. Cermak

Devouring and devoured, roaming on dark and desolate mountains,  
In forests of eternal death, shrieking in hollow trees.

**William Blake**  
*Europe, A Prophecy (1784)*

## Biography

Many are the stories told of the mysterious Green Man, who is said to haunt the woods of Ravenloft's Core; indeed, the tales are nearly as numerous as the trees of the forests in which he hunts.

## Appearance

The Green Man appears to be a man of average height, whose skin is a deep, dark green, except for the skin of his face, which is an earthy brown. He has long hair and a wild beard, colored a green so dark it is almost black. His eyes are black, and they glitter malevolently. His face is twisted in a horrific leer. He wears no clothing. The Green Man can change his shape, if he wishes; he can become any typical woodland beast or bird at will. Regardless of the form he takes, however, he will always have a tuft of green fur or feather somewhere on his body.

## The Green Man

### Unique Nature Spirit, Neutral Evil

<b>Armor Class</b>	6	<b>Str</b>	19
<b>Movement</b>	15	<b>Dex</b>	18
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	12	<b>Con</b>	14
<b>Hit Points</b>	78	<b>Int</b>	11
<b>THAC0</b>	8	<b>Wis</b>	18
<b>Morale</b>	16	<b>Cha</b>	6
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	1	<b>XP</b>	9,000
<b>Damage/attack</b>	1d6 (1d8 vs. Large)+7 (spear)		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Spells, Spears		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	+1 or better magical weapon to hit		
<b>Magic Resistance</b>	Nil		

## Background

Given the rich folklore of the people of Tepest, it is perhaps no surprise that they have the greatest variety of tales describing the horror that is the Green Man. In most of the tales, the Green Man is counted one of the dark fey; in some, he is even the lord or father of these foul creatures. In these tales, the Green Man delights in luring the innocent and unwary alone into the woods, where he sacrifices them to whatever dark gods the fey worship. Another popular tale holds that the Green Man is the last of the druids who became the Brujamonte (see the description of Blackroot in *Ravenloft MC II*); though he escaped the wicked transformation the hags inflicted on his brethren, he was driven mad by the horror of the event, and now stalks the Brujamonte when night falls, feeding the roots of his transformed fellows with the blood of whatever poor soul he manages to ensnare.

The haunted, harried druids of Forlorn also believe the Green Man was once a druid; in fact, they believe he was once of their number. They even give a name to him: Lananguis. According to their tales, when Forfar was uprooted from its home and transformed into the desolate land now known as Forlorn, Lananguis was one of the oldest and wisest of the druids to be carried along with it. However, Lananguis was unable to cope with the terrible unbalance of evil that had descended upon the once fair forests, and went mad, concluding that the best way to cleanse the forest of evil was to wash it with the blood of the good.

The tales of the people of Invidia hold that the Green Man was once a ranger by the name of Berthaut. Berthaut, so the tales go, was a mighty warrior for the cause of good, so mighty that even the Mists themselves grew fearful of him. To put an end to the threat he posed, they placed a horrible curse upon him. Now Berthaut slays those he once protected, profanes that which he once loved and perpetuates that which he once fought against. The tale is widely regarded as allegorical;



# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

Invidian parents use it to warn their children against struggling with the powers-that-be. The Gundarakites tell a similar tale; in their stories, the Green Man was a ranger who dared to stand against the tyrannical god Nerull, but was defeated and slain. As punishment for his presumption, Nerull barred him from entering the land of the dead, and now he wanders the forests as a ghost, hunting those who still breathe.

The peasants of Barovia dispense with the notion that the Green Man was ever human. Their folk stories describe him as a malicious spirit, born from the Mists the first time they touched the Svalich Woods. This tale implies that the Green Man has been in Ravenloft for a very, very long time.

There are many, many other tales of the Green Man; which of them, if any, is true remains a mystery. What is known, however, is that he exists, and he is a serious danger to any who would be so foolish as to wander the woods of Ravenloft at night.

It is worth noting that the Vistani tell no tales of the Green Man. If his name is mentioned, they simply make a sign of protection with their hands. Perhaps that is the most telling tale of all.

## Personality

The Green Man stalks the forests of the Core from nightfall to sunrise. He may be encountered in any forested part of any domain, and he rarely haunts the same forest two nights in a row. How he travels from forest to forest is unknown, but it clearly involves some form of teleportation. His goal in his hunt is always the same; to find an innocent to sacrifice upon the forested ground. The reason behind these sacrifices is unknown, but the method is very well known indeed. Once he has found a victim, he attacks and subdues him or her. The victim is carried to some secluded part of the forest (the significance of the places the Green Man chooses is unknown to any but him), where his or her throat is cruelly gouged with a wooden blade. First the Green Man drinks a portion of the blood, directly from the wound, then he simply drops the victim, face down, to the ground, allowing the blood to spill freely into the soil. Whatever the Green Man may be, he is undoubtedly one of the foulest creatures in the Demiplane, at least of those who are free to roam.

## Combat

The Green Man will only be encountered in forests; whether by physical or psychological limitation, or simply by choice, he never leaves the woodlands, and anyone outside the forests is safe from his direct attack.

The Green Man begins by stalking his prey, watching from the concealment of the underbrush or tree tops. He is a faultless tracker; assume that he can follow his victims' trails regardless of what precautions they take, for he need not track by sight alone. His senses of hearing and smell are extremely powerful. He is never surprised.

Once he has found a likely target, he will shadow their movements. He moves in absolute silence; not only do his footfalls and movements make no noise, animals will not betray his presence with noises of their own. He can *pass without trace* and can become *invisible* at will, though his invisibility is canceled if he attacks. He may choose to follow in the form of an animal; as mentioned above, he can *shapechange* to any typical (i.e. non-giant or non-magical) woodland creature, at will. He can also turn to mist, as a vampire, but only once a day.

The Green Man may first send his minions to test his targets' mettle. He can *charm animal* at will; note, however, that he cannot charm animals under the control of a darklord. At any given time, the Green Man will have 2d6 animals charmed, usually wolves or birds of prey. He can also summon dark faerie creatures to aid him if any reside within the forest and he thinks it necessary. Assume that 1d6 creatures come; likely possibilities are quicklings, boowrays, baobhan sith, goblins and similar creatures. These creatures are allies, not slaves; they will not fight to the death, unlike his charmed beasts. If he is stalking a group, rather than a single person, he will try to have his minions separate one from the rest; that one is the Green Man's chosen sacrifice, and he will avoid killing him or her until the proper time. The chosen sacrifice is usually the one the Green Man judges to be most good, pure, and innocent; note that this is a purely subjective determination, based on appearance and manner.

Once the Green Man decides to attack, he does so fiercely, and almost always from surprise; with his first attack, his victims suffer a -3 penalty to their surprise rolls. His strangest and most used power in combat is his ability to literally pull spears from the hearts of trees. To do this, he touches the trunk of a tree, and his hand sinks in. When he pulls it out, a full-size, wooden spear will be in his clenched fist. Drawing the spears forth appears to do no damage to the trees. He can fight with these spears hand-to-hand, or throw them if he wishes. If he throws a spear, once it has either struck its target or missed, it will immediately rot to nothingness; however, he can pull a new spear immediately. He can only have one spear drawn at a time. Other than the properties just described, the spears are non-magical.

The Green Man has the spell-casting abilities of a 12<sup>th</sup>-level druid. His spells are returned to him each nightfall.

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If things start to turn against him, the Green Man may sink his entire body into an appropriately-sized tree. While so entombed, he cannot be directly targeted by any form of attack or spell, and will regenerate 3 hit points a round. This is a good time to flee, as he will not emerge until he is fully healed. The tree itself is not protected in any way, and if it is cut down and burned with him inside, he will be dispersed until the next solstice or equinox, leaving the forests of Ravenloft temporarily safer (see below); this is the only way to harm him while he is inside a tree.

However, he is not defenseless while entombed: he can still command charmed animals while in the tree; they will protect him to their deaths, and beyond, for once per day he may reanimate the bodies of his animal followers as 2 HD zombies. If they are slain a second time, they may not be reanimated. He can take no actions other than commanding his pets while inside the tree. When he does finally emerge from his hiding place, it must be from the same tree; he cannot use this power to travel; as mentioned above, it is not known how he travels between forests. Perhaps the Mists aid him.

There is no known way to permanently destroy the Green Man. If he is reduced to 0 hit points before he is able to retreat inside a tree, he will dissolve into mist which will then vanish in the night air. He will not return to haunt the Core's forests until the next solstice or equinox (use the calendar of the domain in which he was "killed" if there is some confusion regarding passage of time in Ravenloft).

The Green Man can only be harmed by +1 or better weapons. Despite tales that he is one of the undead, the Green Man cannot be turned, and holy water has no effect on him.

If the Green Man is victorious in a combat, he will use his spell-casting abilities or his great strength to subdue his chosen sacrifice. He will take them to a remote location, where he will pull a wooden sacrificial dagger from a nearby tree (this is a non-combat power only; the dagger is fairly ineffectual as a weapon, being suitable only for murder), and slay the victim as described above.

During combats, the Green Man is always utterly, eerily silent. It is rumored that he whispers dark and forbidden secrets of the land to his sacrificial victims, just before he cuts their throats, but no one has survived such an encounter in order to verify this.

about him. Once the PCs have heard many disparate tales and the terror the creature represents has fully sunk in, that is the time to spring him on the party. If the DM has made the tales suitably terrifying, the player's reactions when they realize the legendary Green Man they have heard so much about is attacking them should be quite rewarding.

The Green Man makes an excellent "en route" encounter if the PCs are traveling by night through woodlands. He is much more frightening and formidable than the standard wandering monster encounters. The DM should be careful not to overuse him, though; he should not be run into every time the PCs hike through a forest. One encounter is probably more than enough to be memorable.

The Green Man may himself be the target of an adventure. Any heroes who successfully track and slay the legendary bogeyman will likely become very famous indeed; the DM should be careful about allowing the PCs this opportunity, and wait until the heroes are sufficiently powerful enough to deserve it. Another possibility is seeking the Green Man for counsel; he is rumored to know many forbidden secrets. How the heroes could possibly mollify and communicate with him is left to the DM's imagination; it should not be a simple process, and any knowledge the characters do gain should be double-edged, with the edge facing the heroes the sharper...

Note that it is left up to the DM to determine which tale is the true origin of the Green Man, if any.

## Adventure Ideas

The PCs should hear of the Green Man long before they encounter him. He is a fabled and feared creature of evil in Ravenloft, and the PCs may hear many a tavern tale

# NIGHT BLOSSOM

by Jeremy W. Kiesling

No more be grieved at that which thou hast done:  
Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud;  
Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun,  
And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud.

**William Shakespeare**  
*Sonnet XXXV*

## Appearance

A resident of the Rokushima Taiyoo, Night Blossom is not her real name. The name comes from her MO of leaving a night-blooming flower at the scene of her contracts. Night Blossom is rarely seen, even by her own victims. The few witnesses that have seen her did not live long after describing her to authorities. Night Blossom is of average size for her strain of vampirism, 5' 10". Violet eyes and short, black hair accent her slightly animalistic face and near-luminous skin. On her hands, the fingernails grow to a length of five inches and are usually painted with a dark hue.

## Night Blossom

**217-year old Old Oriental Vampire**  
**12<sup>th</sup>-level Ninja, Chaotic Evil**

<b>Armor Class</b>	1	<b>Str</b>	18/00
<b>Movement</b>	12, Fl 6 (C)	<b>Dex</b>	19
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	11+3	<b>Con</b>	18
<b>Hit Points</b>	65	<b>Int</b>	13
<b>THAC0</b>	9	<b>Wis</b>	12
<b>Morale</b>	14	<b>Cha</b>	16
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	2	<b>XP</b>	11,000
<b>Damage/attack</b>	1d4+6/1d4+6 or weapon		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Energy drain, <i>hold</i> victim, spells		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	See below		
<b>Special Weaknesses</b>	Bamboo, rosemary, sunlight		
<b>Thief Abilities</b>	PP 95%, OL 102%*, F/RT 100%*, MS 106%*, HS 115%*, DN 85%, RL 65%		
<b>Magic Resistance</b>	Nil		

\* Night Blossom's checks still fail on a roll of 96-100. The abilities over 100% are for when she is using her ring of mortal mimicry.

## Background

Night Blossom came from the region of Kara-Tur on Abeir-Toril. There, she was one of the few women ninjas in her clan. All during her training, she had to endure the chauvinistic attitudes of her fellow male students and had to work twice as hard to prove herself to them. The only person she honored was her trainer, known to the world as the assassin, Snow Tiger, who in turn gave her the respect she deserved by warning his male students not to underestimate a woman.

Eventually, Night Blossom became a spirit warrior of great skill, and led several missions to the chagrin of her former classmates. Despite this honor, she was a second-class citizen in the men's eyes. During one particular mission, Night Blossom succeeded in assassinating a noble where others had failed. The men were furious that a woman had bested their best male ninja in a mission. Her former classmates began to spread rumors of Night Blossom taking bribes, ignoring clan laws when it suited her, and of killing clansmen by making it look like an accident. When these rumors reached the clan leader, now Night Blossom's former teacher, he could not believe it and summoned the clan together to address the issue. Snow Tiger was honor bound to find out the truth, and as a proof of her loyalty, he sent Night Blossom on a solo mission to retrieve a magical item, a *brass tiger figurine of wondrous power*, kept by a monster that had stolen it from the clan years ago. Night Blossom knew it was a suicide mission and so did everyone else. She felt betrayed, and she made a silent vow that if she survived the mission, she would have revenge on all who had caused her harm.

The monster was an Oriental vampire of some power and he easily subdued her, turning her into a vampire under his control. Years later, her former clan,

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

led by Snow Tiger, arrived in force to retrieve the item in force. Much to their surprise, and dismay, they were confronted by their former clanswoman. The war party was wiped out, save Snow Tiger, who fought Night Blossom's master in an attempt to free her.

Eventually, it was just Snow Tiger and the two vampires. Snow Tiger pleaded to Night Blossom to serve the clan one last time and slay the abomination that was her master. To his surprise, and her master's, she turned around and pierced her master's heart with a bamboo shaft, which immobilized him and promptly threw him outside where the sun would eventually claim him. Snow Tiger thanked her and asked for forgiveness as he must kill her also. In her mind, this was the final act of betrayal and Night Blossom slew her former teacher by feeding on his life energy and burning the body. Night Blossom did not notice that the smoke from the pyre had followed her back to her coffin and coalesced around her lair as she lay down for the day. When she awoke, Night Blossom found herself in Barovia.

## Combat

Night Blossom is an oriental vampire as described in *RLMC3* and a ninja. She gets 2 attacks per round. With a Strength of 18/00, Night Blossom has a +3 to attack and a +6 to damage in melee. In addition, her nails count as +1 weapons for a total damage bonus of +7. If both hands strike, she can grab her opponent and bite for 1d4 with no Strength bonuses and a loss of 2 energy levels.

In lieu of her nails, Night Blossom can use *Eclipse*, her *katana* +2, *blacklight blade* (see sidebar). As a ninja, she is a specialist in ninjitsu, still getting her 2 attacks per round while she is using her martial arts. She knows four special moves from *The Complete Ninja's Handbook* (DM's choice).

As ninja of the spirit warrior kit, Night Blossom has following abilities appropriate to 12<sup>th</sup> level: She can cast spells at 4<sup>th</sup> level of effect as long as the spells are illusion spells or ninja-oriented spells. Her spell book contains all ninja spells plus several illusions found in the *Player's Handbook*; she can read scrolls like a thief; and she can walk across water as described in *CNH*.

Night Blossom has all the normal powers and immunities of her kind with the following exceptions: Her *hold gaze* saves at a -5 penalty and a +2 weapon or better is required to hit.

Night Blossom also owns a unique magical item to aid her in her unliving occupation: a *ring of mortal mimicry*.

## Current Sketch

Night Blossom currently resides in the Rokushima Taiyoo, where she sells her skills to anybody who thinks they can afford her. Some of the time, emissaries from a domain lord such as Strahd or Hazlik will come and ask for her services. She always asks for payment in advance and it is usually in the form of magical items tailored for her personal use or the life of the emissary.

Night Blossom keeps several safe houses in the Core in various domains, all guarded by traps and minions. When on trips within and outside the Core, she carries a portable hole containing an emergency coffin filled with native soil.

## Adventure Ideas

- ◆ Night Blossom wants to create a clan of undead ninjas. She could be killing ninjas on missions to make akikage; these go ahead and kill their targets and using her amulet to turn them into ansasshia (*RLMC3*).
- ◆ The PCs could be hunted by Night Blossom as part of a contract from a one of their former adversaries that escaped. The darklord Malken of Nova Vaasa cannot close the borders of his domain, however it is said in the red or black box (I can't remember which) that he sends an infallible assassin after people who leave the domain until they return.
- ◆ Night Blossom could be used as part of a larger plot to capture a PC, and turn him/her into a vampire. (This is a vicious one and should only be used against troublesome characters. It works great with thieves.)
- ◆ In Rokushima Taiyoo, a vampire war could take place between Mayonaka and Night Blossom, and the PCs are caught in the middle.

### Magical Items

***Eclipse, katana +2, blacklight blade:*** This magical blade is a reversed version of the *sun blade* described in the *DMG*. The blade does damage as a katana, but has the speed factor and weight of ninja-to and can be used by anyone with a proficiency in either. The special power creates an aura of blackness that affects the living instead of the undead. The alignment of this item is NE. Use of this blade by PCs requires a powers check. (Supplied by Tsien Chiang, Lord of I'Cath, to kill a male paladin who had escaped.)

***Ring of Mortal Mimicry:*** This ring duplicates the effects of the *mimic mortal* spell. As with the spell, Night Blossom can choose how many vulnerabilities/ powers to give up for up to 8 hours. This ring has helped on several occasions when the missions required her to operate in daylight. This ring can only be used by the undead. (Supplied by Strahd on her first mission for him, infiltrating an adventuring party.)

# THE KARGATANE

by the Kargatane

Please accept my resignation.  
I don't care to belong to any club that will accept me as a member.

**Groucho Marx**  
*The Groucho Letters (1967)*

## Biography

A cell of the secret society called the Kargatane, these villainous minions of the Kargat have settled, like rats in the walls, in the very heart of Barovia. Here, in an innocuous bookshop in the village of Vallaki, they have worked, unremarked, gathering intelligence and collecting items of interest for their Darkonian masters. But, with the Grim Harvest, they have lost contact with their masters. Awaiting word from their mistress Kazandra, the agents of Necropolis still diligently go about their dark work, waiting for the reward of eternal life they were promised so long ago.

...At least, that's the way they tell it. In truth, even organizations as carefully controlled as the Kargat make mistakes, and on occasion the Kargat had cause to regret bringing certain recruits into the folds of the Kargatane. In the decade after the Great Upheaval, the Kargat found themselves working with less and less direction from their master, Azalin, who was far more concerned with advancing the Grim Harvest than his servants' petty complaints. Thus, in late 748, Lady Kazandra took it upon herself to remove her problem recruits in one fell swoop, sending them packing to the heart of Barovia, home of her master's archenemy.

Now, the Kargatane diligently loiter in Vallaki, eagerly awaiting to hear word that they've been summoned home. Meanwhile, Lady Kazandra goes about her business in Martira Bay, patiently waiting for word that her problem recruits have been butchered by Strahd.

## ERNST TURAGDON

Ernst Turagdon has spent a large portion of his life asking questions. His role in the Kargatane cell in Vallaki provides him with the ideal opportunity to develop these skills.

## Appearance

Ernst is a man of fairly unremarkable build, with straight, dark brown hair that is parted straight down the middle. Having grown up among the aristocracy of Il Aluk, Ernst likes to dress well, and often stands out from the rest of the Kargatane in that respect. His wardrobe consists of a range of finely woven garments bought from the merchants that travel through Vallaki.

## Ernst Turagdon

**7<sup>th</sup>-level Human Psionicist, Lawful Evil**

<b>Armor Class</b>	0	<b>Str</b>	8
<b>Movement</b>	12	<b>Dex</b>	10
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	7	<b>Con</b>	12
<b>Hit Points</b>	28	<b>Int</b>	12
<b>THAC0</b>	17	<b>Wis</b>	17
<b>Morale</b>	17	<b>Chr</b>	14
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	1	<b>XP</b>	xx
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	By weapon		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Psionics		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	Psionics		

## Background

The leader of this Kargatane cell, Ernst was born in Il Aluk in 706. He was the only child of an aristocratic

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

family that had connections with many of the well-to-do in the city. From the comfort of his surroundings and the love and care of his parents, one would expect that Ernst would grow up as a stable, well-adjusted child. However, a freak affinity for the powers of the mind left him a strange, unsociable individual.

Ernst was always a very quiet boy, and so was seemingly well-mannered—enough so that when his parents held lavish dinners for the wealthy of the city, he would be allowed to sit and eat with them. At the age of twelve he began to speak up during dinner to ask questions of the guests at the table. While asked with the seemingly innocent curiosity of a child, his questions always had an edge that made the guests uneasy.

Professor Stretton of the University of Il Aluk was quite taken aback when Ernst asked what they did with the corpses they used for research purposes. The designer Rula Barcliff was upset when asked if she knew about the nine-year-old children being worked to death in the slums of Desolatus to weave her fabric. But Ernst's future was sealed at the age of fifteen when Lady Kazandra came to a reception at the Turagdon household.

By this time, Ernst's parents had learned not to allow him to the table while guests were present. Halfway through dessert, however, Ernst ventured into the room, interrupting the conversation to speak to Kazandra.

"Why is it that you work for King Azalin, when you seem loyal only to yourself?"

He was hurried off to bed by his parents, but Kazandra, admittedly slightly shaken by the question, had discovered the person she needed.

It wasn't long before Ernst had been inducted into the Kargatane, and was being trained as an interrogator. Helped by his natural psionic abilities and the training provided by Lady Kazandra and some of the elder Kargatane, he was soon adept at extracting confessions from the most reluctant of victims.

Many years later, Ernst received his first assignment outside of his homeland of Darkon. He was to lead a cell of Kargatane to Barovia, where he was to spy on the goings on of the south, and report back to Kazandra.

After meeting his fellow spies, Kazandra took Ernst aside and gave him a large box, 1½ feet to a side, to take with him to Vallaki. She instructed him to open it after reaching their hideout, saying that it was a gift from Azalin himself to aid their task.

When he did open the box in the cellar of the bookshop, he was assaulted by a wind that howled with an otherworldly scream, leaving him unconscious. On awakening, he found himself surrounded by tunnels leaving the cellar, leading deep into the earth, from which a constant wind howled through his head.

The box did not just change his surroundings, however. When speaking, Ernst found that his deep voice now carried an undercurrent of the screaming winds he had heard inside the box. Those who listened to him for long periods of time found themselves increasingly jittery and frustrated, making his interrogations that much more effective.

## Personality

As an adult, Ernst is more talkative and outgoing than he was as a boy—but not much. He holds a lot of respect for the position of leadership Kazandra has given him, and so does what is required to manage the other members of his cell, but is by no means a sociable individual with the rest of the group.

In keeping with his work, Ernst chooses to phrase nearly every sentence he speaks as a question. This can be unnerving for the people to whom he is speaking, who always feel as if they are on the back foot. Thankfully, the advent of his new voice has meant that Ernst often tries to keep his conversations brief when not interrogating someone, as even he does not enjoy the unsettling sound of his voice.

Ernst has a strong sense of personal space, and rarely likes to get physically close to anyone, least of all the other Kargatane. When sitting at a large table, he will always choose the seat furthest from others, and even when interrogating someone he will generally remain on the other side of the room, choosing to let his words do the work.

Anger is an emotion that Ernst rarely, if ever, seems to feel. Even when confronted by the most outrageous abuse, or attacked by another, his face will convey only calmness, and perhaps a slight sense of amusement. This can be quite disturbing for those in his presence.

## Combat

Ernst is not an imposing physical combatant at all. When forced into physical combat, he will use a dark wooden cane that he took from his parent's home. The heavy brass handle is fashioned in an abstract pattern that can look eerily like a gallows. He is also proficient with the wheellock belt pistol.

The powers of the mind are where Ernst's strength lies, and he uses these to terrify and confuse any who might oppose him. Rather than defeat the foe, Ernst attempts to make the enemy keep their distance, using aversion and phobia amplification to generate irrational fears and reactions.

Even during combat, he continues to speak and ask questions of his opponents, aiming to unsettle them with the distant howling that can be heard in his voice. For

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

each full round that Ernst has been speaking, opponents receive a cumulative -1 penalty to their saving throws against his mental attacks. For example, if Ernst has been able to keep up his questioning for the previous three rounds of combat, opponents will suffer a -3 penalty to their saving throws against mental attacks like Ego Whip.

## Psionic Summary:

Level	Dis/Sci/Dev	Attack/Defense	Score	PSPs
7	3/4/12	EW/MB, TS, ToIW	xx	96

**Psychometabolism - Sciences:** aging, heightened senses.

**Telepathy - Sciences:** fate link, mindlink, mindwipe.

**Devotions:** aversion, contact, ego whip, false sensory input, life detection, phobia amplification.

**Clairsentience - Sciences:** sensitivity to psychic impressions. **Devotions:** poison sense, spirit sense.

## Current Activities

Ernst's role in the bookshop is largely one of organization, being the main correspondent with Lady Kazandra. He's also one of the neatest of the cell, his room being a paragon of tidiness compared to other areas of the shop. He can frequently be seen making tiny adjustments to the placement of paintings, books or other objects around the shelves of the shop.

# WILLIAM GRUHMAN

Long ago, William Gruhman was a man who might have opposed the evil of the Kargatane and their masters. The thing calling himself William Gruhman now is but a tattered shell of that person.

## Appearance

William Gruhman is most often seen peering out from the back of the room, or the edge of a shadow. He has haunted, brooding eyes, and dark hair, now speckled with grey and receding at the temples. His weight fluctuates from day to day, a symptom of his unnatural existence. At full health, Gruhman is a bit plump, but when he has

not "fed" for a few days, he withers to a nearly skeletal frame. Gruhman tends to wear somber colors, and always wears some repetitive variation on the same outfit: a loose shirt, waistcoat, and long coat. In fact, he often wears the same outfit day in and day out, until they start to fray, or another Kargatane reminds him to change into a fresh clothes.

Gruhman is fairly somber and inexpressive most of the time, and when left alone tends to simply sit or stand where he is, motionless, until approached by someone else. Still, he can play at being quite personable when need be. When angered, his face becomes a mask of feral rage. When William finds something amusing, he habitually snickers with a dry, staccato cackle which sounds distressingly like a rattlesnake.

## William Gruhman

### 6<sup>th</sup>-level Podling Thief, Chaotic Evil

<b>Armor Class</b>	8	<b>Str</b>	12
<b>Movement</b>	12	<b>Dex</b>	15
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	6	<b>Con</b>	9
<b>Hit Points</b>	24	<b>Int</b>	19
<b>THAC0</b>	18	<b>Wis</b>	7
<b>Morale</b>	17	<b>Chr</b>	8
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	1	<b>XP</b>	xx
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	By weapon		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Backstab (x3 dmg)		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	See below		
<b>Special Vulnerabilities</b>	See below		
<b>Thief Abilities</b>	PP 20% OL 25% F/RT 40% MS 40% HS 75% DN 50% CW 70% RL 5%		

## Background

William Gruhman first appeared in Martira Bay in 746, alone and haunted by personal demons. Although William insists that discussing his life before this time causes him suffering, and that his prior life is ultimately meaningless to him now, he has continually dropped so many hints into casual conversation that his fellow Kargatane have pieced together the theory that he was an adventurer who, either through gross error or outright betrayal (depending on Gruhman's mood at the time of the telling), caused the destruction of his comrades at arms. In fact, the truth is far stranger.

Gruhman was in fact once a member of an adventuring group, and was dedicated to fighting evil in all its guises. Eventually, during their travels, the group came upon a village being terrorized by a doppelganger plant, and William fell under its dread control. His comrades were skilled in all manner of occult arts and quickly surmised what had befallen their friend.

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

However, they were far from confident that they could find and destroy the source of the evil before it devoured William's soul entirely.

Thus did they embark on a bold and dangerous experiment. They ambushed William, bound him securely, and then spent all their resources in the attempt to tear him away from the doppelganger plant's mind bondage. They forced a Ring of Mind Shielding on his finger, and subjected him to a barrage of protective spells and rites. Miraculously, their combined efforts somehow successfully severed the connection between the doppelganger plant and its podling. Leaving Gruhman bound and exhausted, his comrades then turned their attention to finding the plant itself, and soon the foul entity met a fiery doom.

But Gruhman's "rescue" had been fatally flawed. The individual they saved had William's body; William's memories; William's mannerisms. Every part was William, but these parts added up to a whole entirely alien to the man they had known.

They had not saved William Gruhman, their friend. They had saved William Gruhman, the podling.

Gruhman's will was again his own, but he was also instantly aware of his altered nature; he could feel the hollow chill where his soul had been. After the doppelganger plant had been destroyed, and Gruhman realized his new condition was permanent, he slaughtered his comrades in a fit of rage, the new Gruhman's way of thanking them for damning him to this new half-life.

Gruhman wandered to Martira Bay, unhinged and purposeless. Most people who passed him on the streets dismissed him as a lost one, but his sunken eyes studied them. All of them.

The podling Gruhman had all of the old William's memories, but had lost all empathy for the humans around him. Simply put, he had lost his own spark of life, and now had no idea why *anyone* did *anything*. He started to silently and obsessively analyze every aspect of the behavior of everyone he met, relating their actions to his own bleak world view. Piece by piece, thread by thread, Gruhman's inhuman mind wove together a chillingly detailed model of human nature, and in his "calculations," he noticed the activities of the Kargat.

In time, as Gruhman was sitting alone on the docks, waiting for the night to pass, a pair of Kargatane passed by on their way to assassinate the captain of a docked ship (and suspected smuggler). Gruhman caught the pair's attention with an idle comment and then, perhaps only for his own amusement, revealed that he knew the entirety of their plan-and immediately followed up on this revelation with a list of improvements to the scheme.

The Kargatane were taken aback, and of course considered eliminating Gruhman on the spot, but after

careful deliberation, William Gruhman was invited into their ranks.

Gruhman served his Kargat masters loyally. His zeal for the cause was eclipsed only by his penchant for self-promotion; Gruhman made no secret that his goal was to pull himself up into the Kargat, no matter what the cost. Gruhman's dedication kept him a valuable asset, but Kazandra grew concerned over his mental stability, and his ever increasing drive to rise in the ranks. When she discovered his true nature, and that her *charm* had no effect on him, she had the potential liability packed off to Barovia.

By this time, Gruhman had gained a reputation as the Kargatane's rabid attack dog, liable to destroy *anyone* who crossed him. To prevent one of his violent outbursts, Kazandra secretly promoted him, welcoming him into the bottom ranks of the Kargat. While Gruhman was still gloating over this accomplishment, she gave him his first mission: to accompany a group of Kargatane to the hostile and distant domain of Barovia, posing as one of their number, and to covertly report on his comrade's activities. William barely had time to whimper before he was packed off to backwater Vallaki.

## Personality

William Gruhman is a podling, albeit one who enjoys a unique form of freedom. He need neither eat nor sleep, nor does he gain any benefit from doing so. He does not breathe, and he has no heartbeat-in fact, there is nothing but a cold and empty hollow space where his heart should be.

Empty and hollow describes Gruhman's spirit as well, although he is far from emotionless. In fact, his bleak, soulless existence has left Gruhman emotionally unstable. Most often, Gruhman seems quite passive and meek, but when he feels (rightly or not) that he has been wronged his wrath knows no bounds. When fueled by rage, Gruhman will stalk the offending party to the ends of the demiplane, and rarely does he satisfy himself by simply killing his perceived foe. Gruhman greatly prefers to engage in a campaign of terror, murdering the offender's friends and loved ones, burning their homes, kicking their dog, and otherwise maniacally destroying all they hold dear. Rumor has it that Gruhman's insane rage once even claimed the life of a fellow Kargatane.

Gruhman survived his transformation into a podling only through extreme circumstance and blind luck. His current existence torments him, and he is convinced that Fate itself intervened in his transformation. In fact, he has come to see not only his life, but all of existence as the sick joke of an insane higher power. In his madness, Gruhman thinks he can see elements of this joke's "punchline" in misery, be it his own or others.



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Unraveling the mystery of this Grand Joke has become his driving force; he is utterly obsessed with constructing a mental framework of all reality, and in his own way has developed an acidic wit. His endless desire to know *everything* leads him to spy on everyone he can, and to poke his nose into everyone's business--often to the irritation of his comrades or Kargat superiors. Whenever presented with a situation which would require a horror or madness check from a sane mind, Gruhman typically senses he's found some element of the Grand Joke, and breaks into his rattlesnake laugh.

As mentioned, Gruhman has become quite the cynical student of human nature. He still has very little grasp of people's inner motivations (which is to say, his frighteningly bleak rationales seldom match the truth), but he has become incredibly skilled at predicting their actions. After studying a given person for a mere day, he can make an Intelligence check, trying again once a day until he succeeds. Once he does succeed, he has surmised the character's alignment.

A week after learning his subject's class, he can start making Intelligence checks (again 1/day) to determine his subject's character class (if they have one).

Once Gruhman knows his subject's class and alignment, he becomes a much more dangerous foe: he has now constructed a mental model of the character's behavior patterns, and can now predict specific actions.

For example, if Gruhman is searching for an escaped prisoner, he can make an Intelligence check to determine the general direction in which the prisoner fled. At times, Gruhman's chains of logic seem to come eerily close to reading the mind of his victim. Gruhman can attempt to predict the actions no more than once an hour. If the Intelligence check fails, Gruhman simply realizes that he does not possess enough information to reach a judgment-with one special exception.

For all his years spent studying mankind, and despite his most persistent and frustrated attempts to unravel its mysteries, Gruhman still has absolutely no understanding of love. The debased offshoots of love, such as lust, loneliness, and domination, he understands perfectly. But true, pure love is an emotion as alien to him as the God-brain to a goat, and as such, it terrifies him. Should Gruhman attempt to predict an action which was actually motivated by true love, he automatically fails at the attempt, and furthermore is prone to making gross errors in judgment. When Gruhman does make mistakes, he typically goes into fits and typically takes out his frustrations on the nearest available target, be they friend, foe, or furniture.

Gruhman despises his current existence, but even more so fears the oblivion that death would bring. This is why he remains so loyal to his Kargat mistress, and why he so desperately seeks to advance through the

ranks; he yearns for the Dark Gift of undeath as the only escape from the false life he leads now. Until he is granted that release, he is more than happy to share his misery with everyone he meets.

## Combat

William Gruhman is not overly fearsome in a straight fight, which is why he avoids them at all costs. Most of his attacks come from behind, and from the shadows. Gruhman takes particular delight whenever his victims die before they even know what hit them. As a thief, he can backstab for triple damage.

As a podling, Gruhman is immune to all mind-affecting spells, and since he does not breathe, he can ignore poison gas and the threat of drowning. However, he is also totally unaffected by healing magic, nor does he heal from any wounds naturally. In fact, due to his unnatural state, he actually loses 1 hp and ten pounds each day, becoming more gaunt and hollow as he does so.

For this reason, Gruhman's very existence depends on his *Ring of Vampiric Regeneration*, taken from the corpse of one of his old comrades. This ring is the only way Gruhman knows to replenish his lost hit points and keep himself from wasting away to pulp.

## Current Activities

Gruhman spends most of his time lurking in the bookshop's crawlspaces, spying on his fellow Kargatane, or in the local inns, spying on the people of Vallaki. When not spying, he spends his days archiving the group's records or scribing tomes, setting up lethal booby traps around the shop, and serving as the group's informal chef. In fact, Gruhman always insists on butchering the game himself, so he can feed on the poor animal's life-force.

Gruhman's quarters are not so much a bedroom as a dusty, cluttered storage closet, since he has no need for rest and takes no pleasure in creature comforts. While other Kargatane are sleeping, William tends to stand motionless in a corner, staring at the wall until his comrades start to wake. In one case, when his comrades left him alone for a few days, he sat unmoving in a chair long enough to gather a layer of dust.

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

## HOLDER

## CROSSPEN

Embittered and misanthropic, Holder Crosspen seeks things that should not be found. His life's work once more proves that some knowledge shouldn't be known.

### Appearance

Holder is an average looking human, just at six foot tall and rather on the thin side. His hair is a premature gray, and he tends to wear heavy boots, a black vest, a shapeless hat and smoked-glass glasses with small metal plates on the sides, along with his street clothes. He has two unusual physical features—his eyes, which have white irises and gray-red whites, and the skin of his torso, which is covered in a myriad of fine gray scales.

### Holder Crosspen

**6<sup>th</sup>-level Human Arcanist, Lawful Evil**

<b>Armor Class</b>	10	<b>Str</b>	9
<b>Movement</b>	12	<b>Dex</b>	11
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	6	<b>Con</b>	9
<b>Hit Points</b>	17	<b>Int</b>	16
<b>THACO</b>	15	<b>Wis</b>	15
<b>Morale</b>	xx	<b>Chr</b>	11
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	1	<b>XP</b>	xx
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	By weapon		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Spells		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	Spells		

**Spells: (4/2/2)** 1<sup>st</sup>—*read magic, comprehend languages, sleep, detect magic*; 2<sup>nd</sup>—*invisibility, spectral hand*; 3<sup>rd</sup>—*tongues, clairaudience*

### Background

Holder was born in Neblus, Darkon to a minor merchant in 726. Growing up in the tombstone city, Holder first found his need to learn about the dark things as a young boy. While playing with friends in the fields beyond the city, Holder stumbled across a long-forgotten tomb. Leaving his friends behind to explore this new wonder, the young boy discovered a tattered tome in a coffin. Pleased with his find, Holder took the book, and in doing so tripped a spell designed to deter grave-robbers. As the dead rose from the surrounding coffins, Holder fled, running in mad terror to his home.

After that day, Holder studied the book he had found, and the dark secrets it contained warped his mind. His family disowned him when he was fourteen, and Holder went to Il Aluk to continue his dark studies. After several years in Il Aluk, Holder met a fellow student of forbidden lore, Susanne Thesker. They formed a relationship of respect for each other's learning and the trappings of romance, but little love passed between them. One night, Holder discovered a spell which would summon a spirit which would teach him one spell of his desire. However, the summoning ritual required a human sacrifice. The arcanist did not believe himself close enough to anyone to get them to follow him into a graveyard at night... until he thought of Susanne.

The next evening, he brought Susanne to the graveyard, ostensibly so she could gather spell components. Shortly, Holder had cast a *sleep* spell on her, staked her to a hillside, and then began the ritual. As he finished the summoning, a great raven with eyes of green flame flew down, and pecking out Susanne's eyes, accepted its payment. By the end of the night, Holder had power over the dead. But, as the dawn came, Holder found his gift's price: his eyes had changed, and could no longer bear the sun. Hiding in a crypt until night fell, Holder took in his new situation.

After adopting a pair of dark glasses, Holder returned to studying forbidden lore. But, his exploits in the cemetery had not gone unnoticed. Within a month's time, he was approached by one of the Kargatane. With offers of knowledge and an immortal lifetime to study it, the Kargatane put their hooks in Holder's soul, and he bound his will to the Kargatane and Azalin.

For several years, Holder pursued research throughout Darkon under the direction of Lady Kazandra, and in time, Holder bound himself with a dark oath to the vampiress. Unfortunately, Holder's harsh, grating personality, combined with a lack of respect of chain of command, led Kazandra to become increasingly frustrated with Crosspen. Ultimately, it was decided that Holder would be sent to Barovia, to remove the nuisance he represented. In 741, Holder was ordered to appear in a Kargat safe-house in Silbervas. There, he first met his current cell of Kargatane. His assignment: to pose as a merchant in Barovia and spy on the actions of Count von Zarovich and other enemies of Darkon.

So, by 749, the Kargatane had established the bookshop and covered their actions from the citizens of the town of Vallaki. But, as Holder pursued his new and rather enjoyable work, a change came, as his chest and back sprouted scales. On the other hand, with this change, Holder also found he could find absolutely anything in the Kargatane's lair.

### Personality

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

Holder Crosspen is obsessed; totally devoted to finding out secret knowledge—the more uncanny, the better. Fortunately, his current assignment is centered on just that—rooting out the secret (and not-so-secret) knowledge in Barovia. He busies himself with study and experiments, cataloguing the knowledge stored in the bookshop and below.

Holder doesn't particularly care for his cell, either, seeing them as rather low-brow. Still, he does realize they are working for the same master, so they must be doing something right. And occasionally, they manage to bring in items that surprise and please him, so Holder has made efforts to educate them on the finer points of the darker areas of the arcane. The one person in the cell Holder always respects is Ernst Turagdon, the cell leader, whose interrogation skills have netted some of the Kargatane's greatest coups.

When not researching or experimenting, and not working in the shop, Holder can be found playing chess somewhere about the store (most often playing against and losing to Ernst). This is his only leisure activity, as he rarely can bring himself to leave the work he does for the Kargatane.

## Combat

In hand to hand combat, Holder uses a dagger. If he can surprise a victim, however, he will switch to his garrote. But, Holder is most likely to try and use his own spells or the collection of scrolls the Kargatane have gathered.

Also, he has two dark gifts from failed Powers Checks. First, once a week, he may *animate dead* as if he were at 8<sup>th</sup> level. But with this, he may no longer expose his eyes to light (such as direct sunlight), taking 1 point of damage per round until he covers his eyes (just shutting them does not help). The light from an overcast day does no damage, but still makes his eyes sting and water. Holder's dark glasses block this damage, allowing him to go outside during the day. While sunlight and artificial light damage Holder's eyes, moonlight does not.

Second, Holder has the ability to know where any item is at any time within the Kargatane's lair. This ability is basically a variant of the spell *locate objects*. However, with this, his entire torso has become covered in smooth grey scales. Holder must be careful to avoid allowing people to see his skin, lest he give his secret dealings with darkness away.

## Current Activities

His job at the bookshop, when someone reminds him to do it and he does manage to tear himself away from the

underground lab, is to order books and file the current stock. While he always manages to get the orders prepared (and not infrequently over-ordering), he usually just dumps a stack of books on the nearest flat surface. Honestly, Holder thinks maintaining the business facade is a waste of his time. Fortunately, he always knows where a given item is at any time.

The room in which Holder sleeps is a rat's nest of books, drifts of paper, dirty dishes, and arcane odds and ends.

## JAERDAPH

## BAELOSS

Like the spiders they revere, the Drow are known for their ability to weave intricate webs of deception. Jaerdaph Baeloss is no exception, although personally, he isn't particularly fond of the hairy, eight-legged creatures.

## Appearance

Jaerdaph is careful to keep his true appearance hidden from those around him, especially the other Kargatane in his cell. He always wears a heavy, black cloak year-round, and covers most of his face beneath the cowl. His hands peek through the cumbersome sleeves, however, and his long, thin and delicate fingers suggest a wiry frame beneath. He speaks in a monotone, not allowing any inflection of his voice to give away his true feelings or motives. When he speaks, a slight lisp can be detected, the result of an injury to his lips and tongue by the venomous bite of a spider. Anyone unfortunate enough to catch his true appearance beneath his ridiculous costume would learn the truth: Jaerdaph is one of the most hideous-looking elves they have ever laid their eyes upon. His pointed ears are what give away his race, but the natural beauty typical of the fey races is noticeably absent from Jaerdaph's countenance.

A rare Drow albino, his skin lacks any discernible pigment, appearing pinkish and scaly. He wears a pair of wire rimmed glasses with smoked lenses to protect his sensitive eyes from the light. Despite his underlying lithe skeletal frame, he is portly and balding, and his remaining hair is yellowed, lacking the luster of the typical luxurious white hair of the Drow. Of course, anyone unfortunate enough to view his true visage would

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

not live long enough to reveal what they had seen to anyone.

## Jaerdaph Baeloss

### 10<sup>th</sup>-level Drow Mage, Chaotic Evil

<b>Armor Class</b>	7	<b>Str</b>	8
<b>Movement</b>	12	<b>Dex</b>	17
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	10	<b>Con</b>	12
<b>Hit Points</b>	30	<b>Int</b>	18
<b>THACO</b>	17	<b>Wis</b>	12
<b>Morale</b>	14	<b>Chr</b>	5
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	1	<b>XP</b>	xx
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	By weapon (hand crossbow, dagger)		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Spell use		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	Spell use		
<b>Special Vulnerabilities</b>	As per Drow		

## Background

Originally from the Underdark city of Menzoberranzan beneath the surface of Faerûn, Jaerdaph Baeloss was the youngest child of the matron mother of the noble house Baeloss, now long extinguished by rival houses. While his sex naturally made him an inferior subject of Drow culture, it was an unheard of birth defect that made him the object of extreme ridicule and torment: Jaerdaph was born an albino.

As a result of his unnaturally pinkish white skin, his elder sisters tormented and tortured him cruelly, more so than was normally accepted in Drow culture. Their favorite method was to lock him away for days in a small room with hundreds of spiders, a creature Jaerdaph always detested. To this day, Jaerdaph suffers from severe arachnophobia. Jaerdaph showed an early aptitude for magic, however, and the thought of finally leaving his cruel family to study the magical arts at Sorcere filled him with new hope. All too soon, his hopes were dashed when he realized that the other Drow found his abnormal appearance appalling, and his fellow classmates mocked him constantly. Rejected and bitter, he became a loner spending all of his time perfecting his magical abilities, and excelling above and beyond his classmates.

As he became more skilled in the art of magic, thoughts of reeking vengeance on the society that despised him grew. He passionately hated the Spider Queen Lolth, mainly because his cruel mother and sisters were devoted priestesses of the goddess. He started defacing shrines and altars dedicated to Lolth across Menzoberranzan, and soon a citywide hunt was called to apprehend the perpetrator. Jaerdaph managed to elude his pursuers, and soon began to feel invincible. He next

turned to murder, cruelly slaying Drow priestesses as they worshipped the Spider Queen in private. One day, he came upon his eldest sister alone in the shrine to Lolth in their own home, and a powerful urge to kill her overcame him. As he wiped his blade clean after taking her life, his mother entered the shrine. The look of horror on her face was soon replaced by one of anger, and she exploded in rage. Feeling that turning her disfigured albino son into a drider was too mild a punishment, she called forth on Lolth to provide her with the greatest of killing magics.

As she began her vengeful prayer, a dark gray mist arose in the shrine, and when it cleared, Jaerdaph found himself on the moonlit streets of Il Aluk in Darkon. After finally acclimating himself to his new situation, Jaerdaph soon met Kazandra for the first time in a seedy tavern in a back alley of Il Aluk. Mistaking her for a common pleasure woman, a disguise for an undercover assignment she was on tracking down a rogue werewolf who betrayed the Kargat, Jaerdaph managed to upset her enough to distract her from her work by his cruel and condemning comments about her chosen profession. Caught off guard, the hunter became the hunted, and Kazandra was suddenly at the mercy of her intended prey. Much to her surprise, Jaerdaph stepped in and rescued her with a most impressive display of magic. Not wanting to be on the receiving end of the spells of such a powerful mage, Kazandra revealed her true identity to him and offered him membership in the Kargatane. Reluctantly, he accepted and was initiated into the ranks, almost immediately to be shipped off to Barovia.

## Personality

Jaerdaph is a man of many secrets. He pretends to his Kargat masters that he is merely human, and his fellow Kargatane remain ignorant of the Drow blood that flows through his veins as well. By using powerful mind shielding spells from his arcane arsenal, even the psionic mind probes of the gifted Ernst Turagdon do not reveal his true age, race or motivations. Truth be told, Jaerdaph Baeloss has no interest whatsoever in the Kargatane, or eventually achieving the status of Kargat that the others covet. As a dark elf, he believes he will never die by natural means, and since even the undead are vulnerable to final death, why bother to make the crossover if nothing will really change for him?

Jaerdaph's true motivations lie in the acquisition of spells and magical items. His dark and dank windowless chamber in the Kargatane bookshop is stacked from floor to ceiling with spell books he has managed to obtain during his "service" to Azalin through Kazandra. He has no intention of turning over any of his magical lore to his

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: RAVENLOFT

masters, and guards his collection from the prying eyes and sticky fingers of the other Kargatane of the bookshop with an elaborate set of wards and protections, both magical and mundane. Jaerdaph's ultimate goal goes beyond the Kargatane and the Kargat: usurping the rule of Darkon and proclaiming himself king. On that day, the Kargat and their Kargatane whelps will pay for their blind, foolish loyalties and meaningless games of intrigue. While Jaerdaph is painfully aware that his abilities are not yet on par with those of Azalin, he knows he has nothing but time to level the playing field. Patience, it seems, just may be a Drow virtue. Jaerdaph also finds the very real possibility that Azalin has destroyed himself to be quite encouraging.

As a result of the mental scarring he suffered at the hands of his sisters as a child, Jaerdaph has an almost unnatural fear of spiders. This phobia is so crippling, that the sight of a mere spider causes him to freeze up motionless. Every so often when his mind becomes slightly unhinged, he will offer a prisoner of the Kargatane a chance to escape if he or she can rid the bookshop of any trace of the hideous creatures. Of course, if even one cobweb remains, the unfortunate soul will be subjected to tortures far more severe than anything inflicted by the others.

## Combat

Jaerdaph Baeloss prefers to maintain a level of isolation and protection that prevents him from becoming actively involved in open combat. If attacked, however, opponents will find that he is a capable mage with a vast and varied arsenal of spells at his command. He seldom uses the same attack spells more than once in front of his Kargatane associates, feeling that the element of surprise is the best defense. If necessary, Jaerdaph can wield a dagger acceptably, and is skilled in the use of the Drow hand-held crossbow. While his spells would allow him to go on the offensive quite easily, he prefers to use more subtle means when on the attack. Making a killing look like an accident is a skill he prides himself on, and slipping a dagger between someone's ribs when they least expect it is much quieter than a flashy display of sorcery.

For gaming purposes, the DM can assume that Jaerdaph has access to any spell that he is of sufficient level to cast with one important exception: the spell can have no material component that consists of spiders, their constituent parts, or cobwebs. When confronting Jaerdaph, anyone presenting a spider to Jaerdaph will cause him to freeze for 1-3 rounds. After this time passes, he will attempt to flee, either by spell or through one of the many secret doors, passages or tunnels within and throughout the Kargatane bookshop.

## DRAWDEN SELRACH

Caught up in the darkness within, Drawden Selrach let the twin muses of literature and medicine frame his madness. A study in how, when falling into bad company, weakness of will is an unsafe quality.

## Appearance

Drawden is a slightly overweight, careless looking figure. His long blond hair is balding, though he usually hides this by wearing a dark, hooded robe at all times.

## Drawden Selrach

### 5<sup>th</sup>-level Human Riddlemaster (Bard)

<b>Armor Class</b>	8	<b>Str</b>	11
<b>Movement</b>	12	<b>Dex</b>	13
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	5	<b>Con</b>	9
<b>Hit Points</b>	27	<b>Int</b>	17
<b>THAC0</b>	18	<b>Wis</b>	7
<b>Morale</b>	xx	<b>Chr</b>	13
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	1 or 2	<b>XP</b>	xx
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	By weapon or 1-2 / 1-2		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Spellcasting, Bardic abilities		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	Madness		

## Background

In his youth, Drawden was always the child who asked questions of everyone; even if he already knew the answer, he just loved to ask questions. This led to him being trained as a Riddlemaster; a dark side to his personality caused him to come to the attention of the Kargatane. When the position in the shop opened up, the Kargatane in Il Aluk were pleased to send him off (to get rid of him, actually), and he enjoyed the chance to visit new lands and question new people.

## Personality

Drawden seems quiet and aloof most of the time, though he does have an unnerving tendency to stare at patrons to the shop, as if he's looking right into their very souls. If he is engaged in conversation, he seems to be an expert on all things; he can speak with authority and conviction

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on any subject, whether he knows anything about it or, more commonly, not. He is also prone to offer advice to those who he thinks merit it. Some of his advice is astute, but most is so inaccurate as to put the person who follows it into mortal danger.

## Combat

As with all bards, he has learned the use of some magic. However, due to simple fate and a quirk in his personality, his lack of will has led him to be unable to learn spells from any school except for the most basic of spells (*comprehend languages*, *read magic*, *detect magic*) and that of Wild Magic. A few unusual Wild Surges have left him with thick, leathery skin (it only looks weather-beaten, but is hard to the touch and grants him AC 8) and rendered him partly insane. This insanity manifests in an unusual manner—whenever an external force tries to influence him via spell or psionics, it triggers his madness; if he makes a saving throw (either the standard one for the spell, or one against breath weapons if not), he does the exact *opposite* of what the person influencing him intended. His partners are aware of this quirk, and have used it to good effect in the past...

## Current Activities

Currently, Drawden works assisting the Kargatane in their work in Barovia. He acts as a jack-of-all-trades in the Kargatane's various plots, filling in wherever needed. He does have some specialties in the biological sciences, and one odd skill in that area. By removing a person's blood and cerebro-spinal fluid, and filtering it in special ways, he can divine certain things about the person. These can include what leader they are loyal to, what their greatest achievement is destined to be, who their true love is fated to be, and similar things.

# RYVEN TRYLBARE

Little is known about Ryven Trylbare. When he was assigned to the Kargatane in Vallaki, he was the darling of the group. Everyone thought he was the peak of what a Kargatane should be. Unfortunately, shortly after arriving Vallaki, Trylbare took a spill from a galloping horse, smashing his head open. He died instantly. The Kargatane, however, could not accept this. Surely, no one in the Kargatane could die, and especially not in such a trivial manner. It went against the whole point of the Kargatane—that in the end you *didn't* die. So, the Kargatane took Trylbare's body, treated it with

quicklime, and propped it on an old sofa in the shop's attic. Years later, Trylbare's corpse still sits there, quietly mummifying. The Kargatane still ask it questions, hold conversations with it, and generally refuse to accept the fact that Trylbare is long dead.

## Adventure Ideas

- ◆ Traveling through Invidia, the heroes fall in with the Gundrakan rebels. Taken to Castle Hunadora, the PCs are given a job by Matton on behalf of Gabrielle Aderre. Their job is to retrieve an ancient weapon reported to have slain a fiend many centuries ago. The location Matton gives them for the weapon is in the tunnels beneath the Kargatane's bookshop. Now the characters must break into the shop, search the shop and its tunnels, find the weapon, escape and survive the process.
- ◆ The PCs come into possession of an infamous book. A few nights after they find the book, they are attacked and the book stolen. Who did this? Clues left behind point to the Kargatane. Now the heroes must retrieve the text, lest the Kargatane use it for the evil it was intended.
- ◆ When the ghouls the heroes slay turn out to have been carrying parcels to a Kazandra in Martira Bay, the heroes are faced with evidence of evil on two fronts. In the Barovian village of Vallaki, a secret society appears to be operating. Should the PCs turn to the authorities in Vallaki, and attempt to root out this foe? Or, should they focus on Martira Bay, where the mastermind of the foe in Vallaki hides?

# FRANCISCO GARCIA

by Bil Boozer

I heed not that my earthly lot  
 Hath little of earth in it -  
 That years of love have been forgot  
 In the hatred of a minute: -  
 I mourn not that the desolate  
 Are happier, sweet, than I,  
 But that *you* sorrow for *my* fate  
 Who am a passer by.

**Edgar Allen Poe**  
*To* — (1828)

## Biography

Fear can have a strong, tight grip on a soul, even after that soul has died. Francisco Garcia fears being judged for the crimes he committed during his life, so on the nights when his guilt is burdensome, he comes to the city of New Orleans to seek someone to whom he can confess his crimes, someone who will lend him a sympathetic ear, if she can survive his deadly touch.

## Appearance

Francisco appears as he did just before he died, a 32-year-old, handsome Spaniard, a thin mustache over his rosy lips and dark curly hair falling over his forehead. He stands 5'10" tall and looks in good health, if a little thin. He wears black leggings and a trim, navy-blue shirt. He carries no equipment with him. Though he is completely incorporeal, he appears quite solid and it is only through attempting to touch him or watching him move through solid objects that his incorporeal nature becomes apparent.

Francisco speaks Spanish and Creole fluently, and over the decades since his death he has picked up a workable knowledge of American English.

## Francisco Garcia

### Second-Magnitude Ghost, Lawful Evil

<b>Armor Class</b>	0	<b>Str</b>	—
<b>Movement</b>	12	<b>Dex</b>	—
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	4	<b>Con</b>	—
<b>Hit Points</b>	20	<b>Int</b>	10
<b>THACO</b>	16	<b>Wis</b>	9
<b>Morale</b>	18	<b>Cha</b>	15
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	1	<b>XP</b>	xx
<b>Damage/attack</b>	Special		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Charm, Constitution drain		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	See below		
<b>Magic Resistance</b>	20%		

## Background

A Spaniard by birth, Francisco Garcia was a fisher who worked the feeding rivers of Lake Pontchartrain, just north of New Orleans. At the age of five, he was brought to Louisiana by his parents, Juan-Pedro and Maria. A former sailor, Juan-Pedro was a violent man who viciously and drunkenly beat his wife and young son. Maria spoke neither English nor French and had difficulty communicating with those few she came in contact with. She lived in constant fear of her husband, doing whatever she could to make him happy and to keep him from hitting her. Retired from sailing because of a wound to his left leg, Juan-Pedro fished the waters of

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: GOTHIC EARTH

Lake Pontchartrain and sold most of his catch to earn a modest living; most of the profits from this enterprise went to gambling, alcohol, and womanizing.

In 1819, when his son turned ten years old, Juan-Pedro began teaching the boy to fish and letting him work at his selling stand. Though the boy hated his father, he was grateful for the opportunity to learn more about the world outside his family's modest hovel. In addition to learning to fish and selling his catch, he also made friends among some of the Creole folk in the area, and he quickly learned to speak their language as well as he spoke his own. One of those Creole was a man called Squier, who would later be known throughout Louisiana by the name Bras-Coupé.

By the time Francisco turned sixteen, his hatred for his violent, abusive father had married itself to a loathing for his weak, passive mother. He began to blame his father's behavior on her, believing that if she had been stronger, his father would not have been able to abuse her as he had. He also began to beat his mother, treating her the way his father treated her.

In August 1828, Maria's torments grew as she was struck with Yellow Fever. Juan-Pedro came home to discover her in bed, her eyes bulging yellow, and knew immediately that she was dying. Their handsome son was not around, as he was out drinking and playing poker with some of his Creole friends. Furious, Juan-Pedro went out into the humid night to find his son and, when he did, he beat him savagely and hauled him back to their home. There he left the young man to tend his mother while Juan-Pedro went to find a doctor.

Convinced that his mother had become ill only so that his father would embarrass him in front of his friends, Francisco smothered the ailing woman with her pillow. When Juan-Pedro returned with a doctor, all that was to be done was to pronounce Maria dead. The death of his mother lifted a great mental burden from Francisco, and he was sure that life would be much easier for him and his father now that she was no longer pulling them down. However, this was not to be the case; Juan-Pedro's drinking grew worse while his tongue grew more abusive, and his patrons stopped frequenting his stand. Finally, Francisco decided he must kill his hated father or they would both become destitute.

Early one dark morning in November when Juan-Pedro returned home so drunk he could barely walk, Francisco made his move. When his father began snoring, Francisco shoved a pillow over the man's face as he had done with his mother. However, Juan-Pedro awoke and started to fight back. Francisco grabbed an empty liquor bottle that Juan-Pedro had dropped on the floor and smashed it across his father's face, knocking the older man unconscious and creating a deep gash across his eye and cheek.

The next morning Juan-Pedro's body was found floating in the lake, part of the broken bottle grasped in his hand, and his death was declared an accident.

Sole heir to his father's business, Francisco was able to support himself and pull in a respectable profit, which, like his father, he used to drink, gamble, and carouse. This latter activity got him occasionally into trouble, and by the time he was 26 he was banned from most of the brothels in New Orleans for his drunken, violent behavior.

At first he plotted revenge, planning to burn down the brothels which had most insulted him. However, before he could enact his plan, his old friend, Squier, on the run from his owner, introduced him to his beautiful young cousin, Anjelique, with whom Francisco was immediately enchanted.

During the following year, Francisco frequently came to call on Anjelique, taking her out dining or for a riverboat ride up the Mississippi. He spent most all the money he had buying new clothes so he would look well-groomed in addition to the many gifts he bought for Anjelique. Finally, in January 1837, the two were married; Squier was unable to attend the ceremony because he was being hunted as a runaway slave. In fact, the day of the wedding was the same day Squier earned the name by which is he more famously known. Two bounty hunters had tracked him down and shot at him as he tried to escape them. Some of the buckshot hit him in the left arm, which would later be amputated in a New Orleans hospital. Unfortunately for the bounty hunters, the one-armed Bras-Coupé escaped through a hospital window soon after the amputation and thus the tall, broad-shouldered black man eluded capture again. By this time, Bras-Coupé's exploits were becoming legendary throughout the state.

Following their wedding, Francisco and Anjelique spent a honeymoon in Mobile, Alabama, one cut short after the dark-skinned Anjelique was accosted by a white man and barely escaped with her life. When they returned to New Orleans, Anjelique saw her new home for the first time and was very disappointed. She had had no idea that Francisco was living in such squalor, and she had no desire to live that way herself, but, with a heavy sigh, she resigned herself to her lot. Francisco saw Anjelique's disappointment and determined that he would work harder so he could provide her the things that would make her life more comfortable, more like the life she'd known before they'd married.

Over the next few months, however, he grew to resent Anjelique's attitude. The day he finally gave in to his passions and hit her, she hit him back with an iron pan. Stunned and furious, he was unable to prevent her from bolting from the house, but he followed her outside and down the long dirt path that led to Little River, just



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up from its mouth at the edge of the lake. This was his personal fishing spot, which all his fellow fishers respected and stayed away from. He caught up with Anjelique there as she was trapped between him and the river. At the last minute, she jumped into the water to swim across, but he jumped upon her and held her down in the water until she stopped moving. Following the murders of his parents, Francisco had felt a relaxing exhilaration, but this time he had killed someone he truly loved, and his mind slipped into madness. He stole a plain coffin, brought it to his fishing spot, and placed his Anjelique within it. He created a small cairn and put the coffin on it. Thereafter, he spent his nights sleeping beside the cairn, occasionally talking to his dead wife.

Meanwhile, Bras-Coupé was spotted again in the swamps outside of New Orleans, this time by two New Orleans policemen. They each shot at him and struck him, felling the giant man as he tried to run away. The shots didn't kill Bras-Coupé, so the policemen beat him until they were sure he was dead. They returned to the city to get others to retrieve the body, but when they returned the body was gone; Bras-Coupé continued to prove harder to kill than the average human, contributing further to his legend.

Finally, in humid July 1837, Bras-Coupé came upon Francisco's fishing spot seeking help from his long-time friend. He had been unable to get treatment for the bullet wounds in his arm and chest, and he hoped Francisco and Anjelique would be able to help him. When he arrived by the river, however, Francisco was not to be found. Instead, Bras-Coupé saw only the coffin on the cairn. Because his only arm was wounded, he was unable to open the coffin to see what was inside. Unfortunately, Francisco did not realize this when he arrived to discover Bras-Coupé staring at the coffin. Quickly, Francisco grabbed an iron anchoring spike from his small boat and stabbed Bras-Coupé three times, killing the already wounded man, but not before the one-armed man laid a powerful curse on the Spaniard: "Curse you, Francisco! You will wander here the days of the earth until you receive the betrayer's reward."

Francisco was well aware that Bras-Coupé was wanted "dead or alive" and that there was a substantial price on his head. He took the coffin containing his wife's body up to his house and hid it in the crawlspace beneath the house. Then he loaded Bras-Coupé's body onto his boat and eventually brought it to authorities in New Orleans, where he exchanged the dead man for a reward of \$250.

The former slave's body was displayed publicly on the Place d'Armes, and thousands of city residents flocked to see it. Few believed Francisco's story that Bras-Coupé had shot at him and missed before Francisco retaliated by stabbing him. Police searching his home

discovered the coffin and the body of Anjelique inside. Francisco was quickly put to trial and in November 1837 he was executed by hanging. Because of Bras-Coupé's curse, however, Francisco's spirit did not go to its final rest.

Francisco is anchored to the spot on the bank of the Little River, yards from its mouth into Lake Pontchartrain, where he killed Anjelique and Bras-Coupé. During the daylight hours, he cannot leave the spot; he spends most of his time pretending to fish or watching the sky; he will become angry if anyone interrupts his solitude during the day. At night, on the other hand, Francisco can leave this spot and typically heads to New Orleans with the hope of luring victims out to his bank by the river.

During the 1890's, most New Orleans natives will be familiar with the story of Bras-Coupé, and any New Orleans native over 70 years old will be able to identify Francisco based on a reasonable description of his ghost. They can relate the story Francisco told about how Bras-Coupé was killed, indicating that they suspect there's more to it than was revealed, but no one knows the real circumstances of what happened other than Francisco (and perhaps Marie LeVeau *filie*). Francisco's trial for the murder of Anjelique was kept generally quiet following the demonstrations that occurred at the death of Bras-Coupé, and anyone who is familiar with Francisco is only 25% likely to remember any details about the trial and execution. Newspapers will have printed stories about the death and mourning of Bras-Coupé; there will only be a small, hard-to-find article on Francisco's trial and execution.

## Personality

Francisco tends to be morose, regretting the loss of Anjelique. He realizes that she will never return to him, but he does feel some comfort when he is able to relate his tale to a woman. Francisco remains quick-tempered even in death, and he will become abusive and violent if thwarted from his endeavors.

Francisco does not understand his curse and therefore does not understand how to remove it or even that it needs to be removed. He is not very eager to meet his Maker. He is well aware that he has lived a sinful life, committing atrocities that would be hard for his Catholic God to forgive.

## Combat

Francisco's attack is weaker than most ghosts'; he does not have the power to age his victims, but his power can

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: GOTHIC EARTH

nonetheless be deadly. If Francisco successfully attacks an opponent or if an opponent touches Francisco with an exposed part of his body (e.g., a fist), then Francisco has touched the opponent's skin, causing the loss of 1d4 points of Constitution. This loss of Constitution may be regained at a rate of 1 point per six hours; however, if a character's Constitution is reduced to 0 (by repeated attacks), then the character dies.

Anyone within 50' of Francisco becomes subject to his aura of fear and must make a successful fear check at -2 or receive a -1 penalty on all saving throws, attack rolls, and proficiency checks so long as he or she remains within 50' of Francisco. An individual on whom Francisco has successfully used his charm ability is immune to his aura of fear effect.

Holy water does no damage to Francisco, and holy symbols do not affect him adversely, but Francisco cannot enter the grounds or buildings of a church nor those of a graveyard. For his own reasons, Garcia also will not enter the grounds of the Haunted House on Royal Street. Francisco cannot become invisible, but he can easily walk through a wall or into the trunk of a thick tree to avoid pursuit. Because he is incorporeal, Francisco cannot be harmed by physical weapons, even magical ones (see ALLERGENS below for an exception); however, adept and mystic spells affect him as if he were a semi-material ghost, provided they overcome his magic resistance. Francisco does possess the undead's immunity to mind-affecting spells and effects. Additionally, he is also immune to all illusion/phantasm spells.

If Francisco is reduced to 0 hit points, he disappears, but three days later his ghost reforms in his lair at sunset. He will remember the circumstances which led to his dissolution, and he'll be inclined to seek vengeance for the slight unless something else distracts him.

Francisco can direct a whispered message to any individual within a 100' radius; only that individual hears the message, which is an enticement for the individual to follow him to his lair. The individual must save vs. spells (with Wisdom bonus applied) to resist the charm of the ghost; otherwise, the individual abruptly approaches Francisco and then follows him back to his lair. If the individual is followed (by adventuring companions, for instance), he or she urges them to leave the pair alone, intimating that they have private business to attend to.

Once at his lair, Francisco releases his control over his victim. If the victim is a woman, Francisco has brought her to be his confessor. He will suggest that he has discovered her wandering in the wilderness and then ask that she stay with him until dawn to keep him company; she must make a Wisdom check with a -3 penalty to know that he is lying. If she attempts to leave,

he will attempt to block her exit by stepping between her and the path away from the spot. He will allow her to "touch" him to see how it weakens her. If she is persistent, he places his hands around her throat and drains away the rest of her Constitution, but he would much prefer that she remain alive.

If his female victim agrees to remain and hear his story, he will tell the tale of his life, including details of the murders of his parents, portraying himself as the victim in all of these events. He'll then tell of his courtship and marriage to Anjelique and then of her death. During the final hour before dawn, he will tell his victim of his last encounter with Bras-Coupé, including the curse that has been placed upon him. Through the course of this conversation, Francisco will move closer and closer to her, until finally, as dawn breaks, he will attempt to kiss her. If she resists, he attempts to kill her. If she does not resist, his lingering kiss affects her as a single attack (i.e., she loses 1d4 Constitution temporarily). He will then thank her for spending the night with him, explain that he prefers to be alone during the day, and ask her to leave. If she refuses to leave, he sighs forlornly and attempts to kill her.

If the victim is male, then Francisco has lured him to the lair only to kill him, possibly in revenge for some slight the victim has made toward Francisco (such as causing his dissolution as described above); this wrong may exist only in the mind of Francisco. Once the victim is in his lair, Francisco will put his hands around the victim's throat and drain away his Constitution until the victim dies. Francisco lures male victims to his lair out of habit. If they are resistant to his lure or expediency is prudent, he has no qualms about killing them before getting them to his lair, although he will attempt to get the victim somewhere with as few witnesses as possible.

Francisco will attempt to lure only one victim to his lair in a particular night; if he is unsuccessful for whatever reason, he may continue to move about through the streets of New Orleans but he will not try to ensnare another victim.

**Allergens:** Francisco will not attempt to attack or lure anyone who he believes possesses an iron spike, the weapon he used to kill Bras-Coupé. If he is attacked by such a weapon, it does 1d6 damage to him. If a *bless* spell has been cast on the iron spike, then it does a full 6 points of damage if the attack is successful. Applicable bonuses (e.g., Strength) may increase the damage done.

Francisco can be destroyed permanently by casting thirty pieces of silver (e.g., 30 coins, 30 spoons, 30 earrings; as long as they are 30 similar small items all made of silver) on the bank of the river at his lair in his presence. He will stop to investigate these items and will discover that he can pick them up; when he picks up the

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last object, he and the objects disappear, permanently. Thirty pieces of silver was the price paid for a betrayal central to Francisco's religious beliefs.

## Adventure Ideas

While Francisco is not generally threatening to adventurers, he is very difficult to damage, so an encounter with him should not involve PCs of lower than three levels of experience.

Ideally, the PCs should have heard of the mysterious disappearances of people during the night and that some of their bodies have been found floating in Lake Pontchartrain, killed by some unidentified wasting disease. (Generally, three to five such bodies are found each month; a very few of them are men's.) Mysterious disappearances are common occurrences in New Orleans during the early 1890's.

If one of the members of the party of PCs is female, she could become the target of Francisco's attention. Alternatively, a female NPC that is well-known to the party could become the target. At least one other PC should observe the target's leaving to follow Francisco, as hopefully the abduction will be prevented and the PCs will investigate the ghost before the following evening, when he may try again.

Sources of information regarding Francisco are mentioned in his background description. Marie LeVeau *filie* is the daughter of Marie LeVeau, the famed "Voodoo Queen" of New Orleans. Many people believe that the two Marie LeVeaus are one and the same, and Marie LeVeau *filie* does not make any effort to dissuade them. Marie LeVeau *filie* should be either a channeler or a shaman, and she has access to much of the information that will be needed to combat Francisco. She should at least mention that he betrayed his friend, Squier; that he was Catholic; and that he was executed by hanging. She could also reveal that Bras-Coupé was killed with an iron spike, or that information could be found elsewhere (e.g., newspapers).

PCs could also encounter Francisco on an evening after he has been unsuccessful in luring a victim to his lair. Discovering that he is a ghost, the PCs might attempt to destroy him, something that will certainly anger him once he reincorporates (if the PCs are successful). He has no interest in the corporeal world, but he might be lulled into conversation about how times have changed since the early 1800's, how the LeVeaus are servants of the devil, or how dangerous the Haunted House on Royal Street is to the quick and the dead. He will be more sympathetic to Catholics than to adherents of other religions.

# LORD LOUIS RANDEEN

by Charles Phipps

Beneath a cherub face and dimpled smile  
T his youthful hunter hides a heart of guile;  
His arrows aimed at random fly in quest  
Of lodging-place within some blameless breast.

**Emily Pauline Johnson**  
*Flint and Feather (1912)*

## Biography

(This is the last communication received from the Westminster Railroad company in the African region of Maetanga before it plunged into Unknown territory and effectively disappeared. Several teams have since been sent to look for it but all have failed to return. It shows what may have happened before the disappearance and offers shocking evidence as to the decay of gentleman hunter Lord Louis Randeem's mind)

TO: Westminster Railroad company Board  
FROM: Lord Lois Randeem

This letter will no doubt come as a shock to the board, as no doubt you have received the letter from Mr. Harker that details the lie of my being mauled to death by the lion you sent me to kill, the lion Bloodypaw. Also it told the mistaken notion that the since-hired new hunters had been successful, and that Bloodypaw is dead. This is incorrect; **Bloodypaw Lives! He Cannot Die** the lion Bloodypaw is quite alive and still murdering your workers, also the adventurers Mr. Harker hired were sadly killed as well, **He Devoured Them. He Did. He Did!** and as you've no doubt noticed I am still alive though severely wounded. **Why Didn't I Die?! The Lion Killed Me!**

I also regret to inform you that the lion Bloodypaw has also killed Mr. Harker and your other representatives here. **They Fought The Beast So They Died** I being the only representative remaining have assumed

command in wake of the lions continued rampages **Maybe The Lion Is Dead?** The thing is not natural and kills some three workers a night, and despite my hunting efforts, it alludes me. No need however to send new workers, as I have taken the liberty of conscripting the savage local tribesmen to build your railroad to the precious diamond mines south. **What Good Are Diamonds When It is Out There?** It WILL be completed and the Lion Bloodypaw WILL be destroyed.

As for a replacement for Mr. Harker, I recommend you send none and allow me full authority over the project. The natives I have conscripted have come to respect me **Fear Me Hate Me.** Since they are such useful labor I think that sending another representative will only cause them to become suspicious and troublesome. **They Might Even Turn To Bloodypaw To Rule Them**

Sincerely

Lord Randeem  
**HeHeHeHeHeHeHeHe.....Lions**

It should come as no surprise that Lord Louis Randeem is insane.

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## Appearance

Lord Louis is a tall man, with long jet black hair and a thick mustache. He is always dressed in the leather skins of all the animals he's killed. He has a long scar across his face from Bloodypaw's swipes at his skull and is never seen without four weapons: two pistols, his rifle and a British saber.

## Lord Louis Randeem

### 10th-level Soldier, Chaotic Evil

<b>Armor Class</b>	7	<b>Str</b>	18/61
<b>Movement</b>	12	<b>Dex</b>	15
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	10	<b>Con</b>	18
<b>Hit Points</b>	79	<b>Int</b>	11
<b>THACO</b>	9	<b>Wis</b>	8
<b>Morale</b>	xx	<b>Cha</b>	15
<b>No. Attacks</b>	5	<b>XP</b>	2,000
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	By weapon		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	See below		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	See Below		
<b>Magic Resistance</b>	20%		

## Background

Louis Randeem is a man consumed by his hatred for a beast years dead and is bound to his fantasies as he is by his reality.

Born in Northumberland, England in 1830, Louis Randeem was one of the finest big game hunters in the world, having killed just about one of every creature in existence, but the simplicity of the hunts soon bored him and the occasional assassination or bounty hunting he performed for the unscrupulous did not relieve the tedium either. He was then approached by Mr. William Harker, a representative of the Westminster railroad company, which was building through some of Africa's most untamed land. A lion nicknamed "Bloodypaw" by the workers had slain dozens of workers and had confounded (not to mention killed) their best hunters and Harker wished Randeem to destroy it.

Intrigued, the hunter accepted and journeying down, began to track it. Finding the beast devilishly clever he hunted it for days, eventually confronting it in the jungle miles from camp and shot it square in the chest with his rifle. Then the beast shrugged the wound off before mauling the great hunter! Bloodypaw was actually a warrior of a shapechanger tribe whose land the railroad was crossing. Randeem would have not have cared though, for as he lay dying he knew nothing but hatred, hatred for the thing which had bested him, and it was intense enough to attract an evil spirit servant of the Red Death to enter him. Finding himself beginning to heal

and obsession driving him out of the jungle and to the railroad builders camp, Randeem swore with each breath that he would kill the demon beast; but he was horrified to see the lion's corpse hanging from the watchman's tower! Harker had assumed the worst and sent for several more hunters. The group had much experience in the occult and having deduced the lion's true nature destroyed it.

This was too much for the hunter and his mind broke. Armed with the dark thing inside him, Randeem destroyed Harker and the hunters. At this Lord Louis cut down Bloodypaw's corpse, and called out that Bloodypaw lived and he would destroy it before it harmed more workers. Terrified, the workers soon obeyed his every command and when the maiming began again they actually began to believe him as he continued his mindless hunt, enslaving the nearby tribes to replace lost workers.

(The renewed killings are the result of the fact Lord Louis has unwittingly enslaved the tribe that Bloodypaw came from. The younger warriors of that tribe are now taking revenge on the powerless workers and tribesmen each night. However, they fear the hunter too much and thus delude Randeem into hunting the dead lion each night away from his camp.)

## Personality

Lord Louis has plunged the workers of the railroad into some the deepest parts of Maetanga's jungles. The few remaining British workers are fanatically loyal to him, believing (sadly quite rightly) that without him they have no chance of escaping alive. He is not much of a leader though, spending every moment of his days planning strategies and traps while spending every moment of his nights hunting outside camp. Lord Louis refuses to accept that he is no longer working for the Westminster company, nor that Bloodypaw is dead, nor that all of his hunts are doomed to fail. Indeed he often hallucinates seeing the lion (often with a little help from the Red Death).

## Combat

Lord Louis prefers to hunt from a distance and preferably from the shadows. He prefers to use his firearms, and is extremely skilled in their use (+4 to attack rolls). If cornered into a direct fight (not likely but possible) he will not shy away and attack with his blade as fiercely as the wild beast he (vainly) hunts. He receives an attack bonus of +3 when using this weapon.

The spirit inside Lord Randeem is feeding off the evil he causes and has given him several abilities which reflect his background. Lord Louis has the ability to

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: GOTHIC EARTH

track any prey (man, beast, or otherwise) with 100% chance of success. It is impossible to hide from him; only running will work (and even that not for long). Lord Randeem knows this (though he thinks it is merely his hunting skill) and is perpetually puzzled as to how Bloodypaw escapes him. (The reason is simple: the Lion exists only in his mind now.) Also, Lord Randeem's spirit heals his body incredibly well; he regenerates four hit points per round and will continue to heal even when reduced to 0 hp and beyond. The only wounds he will not heal are those caused by weapons covered with or made from a lion's body part (a blade dipped in blood, a knife of bone, or a club covered in its fur etc.). A firearm's bullet would not keep any of the lion's part on it and is thus useless against him.

Magic or other methods that would totally annihilate the hunter have an unusual effect: Randeem is transformed into a mirror image of Bloodypaw for several days, during which he roams the jungle fleeing all encounters. This was observed when a village shaman tried to destroy Randeem when the hunter enslaved his tribe. The shaman was slain days after when the hunter returned.

Further evidence of Lord Randeem's inhuman nature is that he moves in absolute silence and leaves no trail when he travels.

through the territory. When the characters arrive at his camp they should become slowly aware about the true nature of the goings-on here and worst of all Lord Randeem's madness. Indeed, they may end up hunting Bloodypaw only to have Randeem attack them for trying to "usurp his greatest kill."

- ◆ The players befriend a tribe of friendly natives in the region who have long tried to live peacefully with the rest of the world. Offering the heroes whatever supplies they need, and sharing their admittedly small amount of arcane lore with them, the natives tell of a evil lost tribe of Lion Men who have long plagued their lands and murdered their members. Imploring the heroes to aid them in stopping the Lion Men, the PCs might well do so; but if they return they will discover the natives' village destroyed and the survivors now serving as slaves to build Lord Randeem's railroad. How can they rescue their friends in the face of such an overwhelming force?

## Adventure Ideas

- ◆ The characters are contacted by the Westminster Railroad company and are asked to track down the missing construction team in the Dark Heart of Africa. Although discovering the direction the madman went is no harder than following the (often broken) tracks, the territory that Randeem has led his men through includes scorching desert, cannibal filled jungles and canyons filled with the minions of the Red Death. When the characters finally reach the camp, they come face to face with the autocratic Lord Louis and the supernatural web he has woven around the workers and the natives. Discovering him may be child's play compared to getting out alive...
- ◆ The players are probing some of the darker ends of the Dark Continent when they are attacked by a almost supernatural number of lions whose ferocity is well out of match for a normal race. Just when things look their bleakest Lord Randeem arrives (mistakenly thinking that Bloodypaw went this way) and drives them off (the lions are actually minions of the werereatures). Presenting himself as a heroic English gentleman, he tells the heroes about his mission to stop Bloodypaw and build the railroad

# MORDECAI WEDDINGHAM

by Matthew Ball

What is now proved was once only imagin'd.

**William Blake**

*Proverbs of Hell (Excerpt from The Marriage Of Heaven And Hell) (1790-93)*

## Biography

The forces that drive a man to commit evil deeds can be blatant and obvious or, as often as not, small and subtle pushes that exert just as steady a pressure on one's soul. The case of Mordecai Weddingham offers the opportunity to determine whether a person under such influences can be called truly evil, or simply misguided.

## Appearance

Mordecai Weddingham is a dignified, clean-shaven, middle-aged man, perhaps entering his early forties. He dresses impeccably in the latest continental fashions and surrounds himself with objets d'art and the many comforts that can only be provided by a great wealth. In the past few years, Weddingham appears to have aged prematurely, as his face bears an increasing number of lines with each passing month. Likewise his hair has begun to gray, especially near the temples.

## Mordecai Weddingham

**6<sup>th</sup>-level Human Mystic (Medium),**

**Lawful Evil (formerly Lawful Neutral)**

<b>Armor Class</b>	9	<b>Str</b>	11
<b>Movement</b>	12	<b>Dex</b>	12
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	6	<b>Con</b>	12
<b>Hit Points</b>	29	<b>Int</b>	16
<b>THAC0</b>	18	<b>Wis</b>	17
<b>Morale</b>	10	<b>Cha</b>	14
<b>No. Attacks</b>	1	<b>XP</b>	975
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	By weapon		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Spells		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	Spells		
<b>Magic Resistance</b>	Nil		

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Dagger; Navy Pistol; Sword  
Cane

**Non-weapon Proficiencies:** Spiritcraft (Divination); Prognostication; Sixth Sense; Etiquette; Ancient Language (Greek); Ancient Religion (Greek); History (European Politics); Modern Language (French); Academician

**Spells: (3/3/2)** 1<sup>st</sup>—*personal reading\**; *emotion read\**; *command*; 2<sup>nd</sup>—*hold person*; *mind read\**; *music of the spheres\**; 3<sup>rd</sup>—*emotion control\**; *speak with dead*

Spells marked with an asterisk (\*) come from the Tome of Magic.

## Background

Mordecai Weddingham was born into a middle-class London family in 1856. At a young age he began to feel the first stirrings of his talent for precognition as he would occasionally experience strong flashes and sensations regarding those he came in contact with. His family showed great disapproval for such displays, and Mordecai soon learned to hide his talent and subsequently did not attempt to hone his natural gifts. Weddingham excelled in his studies as a young boy, and soon entered university. Majoring in the ancient religious practices and languages of the Greeks, Weddingham soon left England and traveled the Mediterranean and the rest of the Continent immersed in his studies.

After disappearing from sight for a number of years, Weddingham resurfaced in London and began offering his services as a medium to the elite and the nobility the city. Weddingham's successes and his reputation flourished and he is currently regarded throughout the city as the most accurate and expensive seer available.

Weddingham's readings involve a personal meeting with clients in a lavishly furnished sitting room. Weddingham meets with his clients alone, and there has been very little reported of the spectacle that so often one associates with those who attempt to contact the spirit-world. Weddingham instead asks detailed questions of

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: GOTHIC EARTH

his client, and then focuses his attention on a large painted bowl filled with water—the only unusual object that is present at readings. Most visitors leave a reading with Weddingham a great deal poorer, but satisfied with Weddingham’s results if not disturbed by his alarming accuracy.

Unbeknownst to his clients, Weddingham’s natural talent for precognition is nowhere near as accurate as it appears to be. Weddingham’s abilities are in fact greatly augmented by his judicious use of certain spells and in particular by the bowl that is always present at all of his readings. In fact, this painted dish is an artifact from ancient times, that has been used throughout the ages by seers of numerous races. The last time the bowl was reported was about 300 years ago when it was used by the French prophet, Michel de Nostradame, and it is from this time that the orb is currently known in occult circles as *La Jatte de Nostradame*. (See description of this item in Adventure Ideas).

Like most objects of a magical nature, the taint of the Red Death has besmirched Weddingham’s scrying dish as well. Due to his repeated use of the bowl, Weddingham has been subjected to repeated visions of people obtaining a position of power whereupon they become the despots and tyrants of tomorrow. In his mind, Mordecai sees these visions for just one purpose—so he may put a stop to the lives of these individuals, thus saving the world. The Bowl of Nostradamus always seems to provide enough information—a name, a familiar location, or a landmark—so that Weddingham can always make an attempt at the life of the subject of the visions. So far, no one has escaped the assassinations that Weddingham has planned, and the police are facing a growing number of homicides that appear unrelated save for the fact that there seems to be a lack of motivation in all cases.

## Personality

Weddingham is a driven man. His visions are forcing him to become more reckless in his efforts to put an end to the tyrants of the future. Although he knows that his actions would be perceived as murder by society’s standards, Weddingham feels that he is vindicated as he believes he has become a guardian angel to the entire world. Although Mordecai has not become lax in hiding his vigilante actions, he is becoming increasingly distracted from the strain placed on his mind. Most likely Mordecai will soon slip up, exposing his plans for the entire world to discover.

## Combat

Although adverse to physical confrontations, Weddington will not hesitate to strike back if cornered. He believes he is fulfilling a divine task and will not let anything stop him before his mission is completed. Weddingham also is fearful that the assassinations will be linked to him and as a precaution he has taken to hiring those who will kill for cash. Weddingham points out the victim and leaves the killing to these professionals—a precaution which further removes suspicion from his person. At all times Mordecai carries a loaded pistol concealed somewhere upon his person. Weddingham does not often rely on his spells to aid him in combat, and as a result he usually memorizes spells of a non-combative nature.

## Adventure Ideas

Perhaps the most obvious setup for using Weddingham is to have the players become aware of a rash of unsolved murders in their area. Victims are chosen indiscriminately, with children, prominent figures, and relative unknowns all turning up dead. Perhaps even a friend or relative of the player characters could be found dead which involves the players with Weddingham. Involvement could also be brought about through a contact in the police force, journalism fields, or even through local gossip and the newspapers. Thorough investigative work will eventually lead to Mordecai Weddingham either directly or indirectly through a mercenary killer. The players will have to discover the underlying reason for Weddingham’s actions and somehow put a stop to the madman.

Other ideas for involving Weddingham in a campaign include Weddingham sees visions of one of the PCs eventually becoming a tyrant on the world scene and decides that the PC must be eliminated. This would lead to a campaign where the PC is stalked and attempts are made on the character’s life. The PCs may also track down references to the Bowl of Nostradamus itself and decide that such an artifact may be worth possessing themselves or alternately, the vessel must be destroyed. Finally, if there is a character who lives outside the law, Weddingham may approach this character as a means to carry out his killings.

### La Jatte de Nostredame

*The Bowl of Nostradamus* is so named because it is last recorded as being in the possession of the famed French seer Michel de Nostredame in the sixteenth century. Reports have Nostradamus using the Bowl extensively while he composed his famous quatrains and Centuries. Although the dish disappeared from sight following



# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: GOTHIC EARTH

Nostradamus' death, old documents depict the vessel as being about eighteen inches in diameter, about three inches deep and decorated with black and tan motif. It rests upon a silver base with three legs and is stylized with a series of pictures reminiscent of the artwork of ancient Greece. These descriptions have led some antiquarians to speculate that the bowl is actually of a Grecian origin, perhaps Delphinian, which could tie the dish and its powers to the legends of the great Oracle of Delphi. Other scholars have suggested that the bowl is in reality a much older artifact with origins in the continent of Atlantis. Some have even said the basin is otherworldly in nature, but the scholarly community has dismissed these opinions as poppycock.

*La Jatte* functions as a standard *crystal ball* (see *DMG* pg. 164) but like all magical items, its original purpose has been warped through the influence of the Red Death. With every use of the dish, there is a 5% chance that the user will see a vision that was not what the user wished to see. These visions usually take the form of some sort of impending doom—be it a foretelling of an unstoppable disaster, or, as in Mordecai Weddingham's case, images of people becoming despotic rulers of portions of the world. These images are always seen in great detail, in fact, often more vividly than the normal visions the bowl instills. Repeated visions of this nature often will place great stress on the user's mind (make a madness check for each unwanted vision) and under certain circumstances it will not take much to cause the owner of *La Jatte's* sanity to completely shatter.

## Other Uses

It is possible to convert Mordecai Weddingham to a character usable in a Ravenloft campaign. Mordecai's powers would more likely be useful as a wizard character than a cleric, but any character class could be shaped into a driven man like Weddingham. One possibility for Mordecai would be to develop some ties to the Vistani given his predilection for fortune-telling. *The Bowl of Nostradamus* could easily be placed into a Ravenloft campaign, and could serve as a tool for motivating any number of villains in an ongoing campaign.

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: GOTHIC EARTH

## JAN KRYNIEWICKI

by Marcin Perkowski

Help us to save free Conscience from the paw  
Of hireling wolves whose gospel is their maw.

**John Milton**

*Sonnet XVI: To The Lord General Cromwell (1694)*

### Biography

People who struggle for freedom are always seen as heroes. From Wallace and his Scots to lone, unnamed man on Tien An Men standing against the tanks. But the cry for freedom sometimes turns into howls of vengeance and high, noble ideas falls into blind bloodlust. This is the way of the terrorist.

When you mix a dreamer with a terrorist, you create a man with a true beast at heart. But sometimes that beast is more than feelings. Sometimes it can take the shape of man and walk among us, leaving us unaware of its presence. So beware of “freedom dreamers,” because they can rip you into pieces with their claws. Or at least one of whom I have heard... Jan Kryniewicki.

### Appearance

In human form, Jan Kryniewicki looks like a strong, tall man of about forty years of age. His appearance is somewhat dark; not only is his hair and beard black, but his skin is also darker than one might expect. To enhance his dark demeanor Jan wears dark clothes, preferably black. His voice is deep and rumbling, and when he speaks it sounds like a raging thunderstorm.

In his hybrid form Kryniewicki is taller and stronger than the average werewolf, even those of his powerful loup-garou breed. His fur is jet black without a single trace of lighter hues. His eyes glow red, and his fangs and claws have an uncommonly bloody color. In his wolf form he slinks low to the ground, but is a strongly built animal, and is black as the Devil's entrails.

### Jan Kryniewicki

#### Lowland Loup-Garou, Chaotic Evil \*

<b>Armor Class</b>	4	<b>Str</b>	18
<b>Movement</b>	12 / 15 / 18	<b>Dex</b>	18
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	8+4	<b>Con</b>	18
<b>Hit Points</b>	50	<b>Int</b>	9
<b>THACO</b>	12	<b>Wis</b>	6
<b>Morale</b>	14	<b>Chr</b>	12
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	2 / 3 / 1	<b>XP</b>	6,000
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	By weapon / 1d4, 1d4, 2d4 (claw/claw/bite) / 2d4 (bite)		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Surprise		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	Magic or silver weapon to hit		
<b>Magic Resistance</b>	20%		

\* Scores before the first slash are for Jan in human form. Scores after the first slash are for his hybrid form; scores after the second slash are for his wolf form.

### Background

Jan Kryniewicki is a descendant of the noble Kryniewicki family. His clan once ruled the small Polish town of Haynowka, located halfway between Bialystok and Bialowieza. In an 1860 uprising against Russian occupants, his father Karol Kryniewicki banded together a small army of patriots. They retreated into the forests with their families and started a guerrilla war against the Russians. Sadly, they were no match for a regular army and were crushed in one mighty strike by the Cossacks—the dreaded, ruthless Russian horsemen. Almost all the rebels were killed in battle, although some were captured and hanged for their actions. But a few, like Jan, ran for their lives and escaped, crossing the forest and ending up near Bialystok. There they tried to hide in the small Jewish community in nearby Zabudow. Jan and his surviving comrades were now forced to rely on the mercy of a people they once treated like rubbish.

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Remembering the earlier cruelties they had suffered at the hands of these renegade nobles, the Jews of Zabudow decided not to stick their necks out in the defense of “goys” (non-Jews). It wasn’t long before a resident of Zabudow let a local garrison know about the fugitives. What followed was not a battle, just butchery. All the fugitives except for Jan Kryniewicki were shot from a distance. No one aided in their defense or listened to their pleas for mercy. Jan was captured and sentenced to the tough Bialystok prison, and the Tzar claimed all of his family’s lands for Russia. Released after two long, arduous years, Jan was just a shadow of his former self. Reduced to poverty, he had to take a job as a normal worker at Haynowka’s lumber mill, the same factory once owned by his father.

As time passed he became interested in communism and its ideas. Now living as a poor man, he came to the belief that capitalism was not a fair system. Full of rage and disappointment, he became a prominent leader among his fellow workers. In 1867 he led a great protest action against starvation wages. All industry stopped and Haynowka trembled with righteous human rage. The Russians reacted as they always did: They sent soldiers, and again blood flowed through the streets. The riot was broken and its leaders arrested, except for Kryniewicki, who again fled into the deep forests. Once again a hunted man, he remained hidden in the wilderness for weeks. It was during this time that he met his destiny.

One summer’s night, while he was walking through the enchanted heart of the forest, and armed with his hunting rifle, he spotted two glowing points in the shadows.

“Wolf,” he whispered to himself.

“Hardly,” growled the wolf, and charged to attack. Jan fired at the beast, his gun merely slowing the great werewolf’s pounce. The beast stuck the man with its mighty claws, but to its surprise a work-hardened fist, strong as a hammer, landed a punch to its head, throwing the startled attacker back a few yards. With a curse on his lips Kryniewicki jumped after the beast with a knife with his hands. Like thunder they clashed. The werewolf clamped its jaws around the man’s arms, mighty fangs breaking his bones in several places. The knife worked like a steam-powered machine, opening dozens of wounds in the almost indestructible body of the beast. Kryniewicki’s fury was so great, his attack so savage, that even the lycanthrope’s supernatural healing abilities were not enough to protect it. One of Jan’s slashes cut the werebeast’s throat, and forcing his foe’s head back, Kryniewicki started sucking its pulsing blood right from its veins. The astonished werewolf understood that this was its end ... and it was right.

When dawn came, the sun caught Kryniewicki, his hands and mouth coated with blood, standing over the mutilated body of a naked man.

Jan, as a true native son of the land, understood what had occurred, and would happen to him. He knew what he would become when the next full moon ... and he too was right.

Over next few years, Kryniewicki became the master of a dreaded pack of carefully-chosen werebeasts, and his depredations came to the notice of the Red Death. Wishing to further aid its bloodthirsty minion, it gradually allowed Jan to gain control of his curse.

Kryniewicki and his followers were “patriots.” This meant they shared a hatred of Russians and Jews, and held a strong belief in the resurrection of Poland. They made the part of the woodlands between Bialystok and Haynowka a very dangerous place to travel, by day or night. Kryniewicki never forgot the massacre of his comrades in Zabudow, so he took particular pleasure in targeting and Jews unfortunate enough to be traveling through the vast forest he controlled.

Jan’s vengeance culminated one dark night when his were-patriots ‘pacified’ the entire community of Zabudow. No one was spared, be they man, woman, or child. In a final act of debauchery, Jan ripped the head of the community’s rabbi from his shoulders, and his followers profaned the holy man’s body in every conceivable way. Howling, evil creatures dancing madly among the flames was the last vision for the eyes of the dying city.

The Russians could do nothing to stop Kryniewicki. All patrols they sent to hunt down the responsible party were lost. Sometimes these patrols were found again later ... in pieces.

As the years passed, Jan started to infiltrate the city of Bialystok. After the killings of a few prominent Jews, the community leaders decided to put a stop to the unknown attackers. Rebe (Rabbi) Joshua Fiedorow, the great Kabbalist master, called up a power from another plane. He opened the gate in an abandoned sanitarium near Bialystok, sealing the city against werebeasts of any kind. When Kryniewicki next arrived at the city’s edge, he found himself attacked by nameless horrors. Beings from other plane decimated his entire pack and seriously wounded him. Since then he has tried to find ways into Bialystok on several occasions, but every scout he sends has been ripped apart. To add to his frustration, Jan soon discovered that the town of Bialowieza (a troublesome stronghold of werebears) was also kept out of reach by these extra-planar entities. Thus Jan has had to concentrate on controlling Haynowka, a town where he has a few very powerful allies and agents, including the burgomaster.

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In the meantime, Jan has made strong political connections with Russian communists, and he has participated in preparations for a planned international revolution. The werebeasts spawned from his bloodline escort couriers through the woods and kill “enemies of the working people.”

Of course, their political comrades remain unaware of the pack’s true nature. For them, the pack of werewolves is just a party of Polish communists, forced to hide in the forests by the Tzar’s regime. For example—Kryniewicki is commonly known to them as “comrade Wieslaw.”

## Personality

Jan Kryniewicki is a dread example of a madman. Even worse, he is that kind of madman who considers the loss of his senses to be a gift from the gods. He is almost single-minded in his ideological run of destruction. It does not matter to him that all his ideas cannot mix together; he hates everyone who is not Polish, yet he works for international terrorists he calls “comrades.” He hates nobles, but he is one by birth, and has not forgotten his lineage. Lastly, he holds a deep resentment toward the Jews of Poland, and flies into a blind, murderous rage whenever they cross his path. It is his deepest obsession.

Completely consumed by his madness, Kryniewicki considers himself an angel of righteous vengeance. Anybody arguing with him on any subject becomes his mortal enemy. But worst of all is that Kryniewicki is a truly cunning beast. He is a skilled tactician, and an inspirational commander. He always fights in the front line, and surrenders only if when his forces have lost all chance for victory.

Ironically, he is devoted lover of women, and as with all noble Poles, is very charming in that arena. His female alpha was killed by Rabbi Fiedorow’s horrors in 1870. From that time on, he has been a loner, never entering into any long relationships with his lovers. “It is a matter of principle,” he used to say.

## Combat

In combat Kryniewicki prefers to use two big “nagans” (army pistols). If his victim is unarmed, he will holster his guns and attack “honorably” with his saber. Whenever fighting in the public eye, Kryniewicki always remains in human form. When there are no witnesses, or should he find himself in the direst of circumstances, he will transform into his hybrid form. Once transformed, Jan always succumbs to bloodlust, grappling and savaging the enemy in a furious, berserker attack. If both of Jan’s claw attacks successfully strike a victim in a

single round, then Kryniewicki has grabbed hold of his enemy. Until the victim breaks free, Jan’s bite attacks strike automatically, without need for an attack roll. A victim can escape from Jan’s grip with a successful Bend Bars roll. Kryniewicki never assumes full wolf form unless he is forced to run away.

For every hit point of damage Kryniewicki inflicts with his natural attacks, his opponent has a cumulative 5% chance of acquiring the curse of lycanthropy. Jan has full control over any werewolves he creates, even when they are in human form, so any infected player characters become NPCs after the first full moon. If Kryniewicki is killed, his progeny become free-willed werebeasts, and their lycanthropy can then be cured in the normal fashion.

Unless challenged to an “honorable duel,” Kryniewicki never fights alone. Usually he is accompanied by about 1d4+2 of his lycanthropic minions.

## Adventure Ideas

### Sanitarium Song

The sanctuary of Bialystok is a thorn in Kryniewicki’s side. He will do anything to close the Gate in Choroszcz Sanitarium, but is powerless because the portal is well protected against lycanthropes. He now believes that if some human agent could close the Gate, his lycanthropes could defeat the horrors and rule the entire city. Luckily for him, a party of foreigners (the PCs) does come to the city of Haynowka. The heroes have come to hunt (these lands are famous for their wild game), and hunt they will—His way!

However, Kryniewicki does not understand that the daemonic power protecting Bialystok is not a blind force, but a smart opponent.

The sanitarium is also a weird place by itself. Some of its occupants are stranger than even Kryniewicki himself...

### Howling of Politics

Michal Matujewich is a courier from Moscow, traveling to Vienna. He may also be the target of the heroes’ investigations, for he is a murderer and a traitor. (Details are left to the Dungeon Master’s imagination.) The heroes do not know (or know but have no reason to care) that he is a courier for communist insurrectionists. With the help of official Russian police, the heroes follow Matujewich to the Bialystok region, where any and all trace of Michal disappears. The heroes only know that he is somewhere here, in Bialystok, Haynowka, or Bialowieza, or perhaps in the woods in between.

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The heroes are not aware that Jan Kryniewicki is protecting his “comrade,” and is not going to let him be captured. Perhaps to throw off the heroes, he organizes a total strike of lumber mill workers in Haynowka.

## Of Wolf and Man

Jan Kryniewicki is not just a simple backwoods creature. He sometimes travels—even as far as Paris.

During one trip to Paris, he got himself drunk and insulted one of the heroes’ friends. When the friend slapped his face and had him thrown out of the restaurant, he swore vengeance. And he kept his word. The friend was found the next day, his throat cut with a saber. All witnesses clearly remember the rude Pole who caused some disturbance the evening before. The police and heroes begin a great hunt for the murderer, but Jan is not easy prey. First, he is a communist—so his political comrades in Paris will shield him. Second, he is a predator, and feels that that being hunted so is an insult to his honor. Thus, in his opinion, he is the one who should seek justice (his kind, at least), and fully intends to do so.

## Werewar

Bialowieza (meaning *White Tower*) is a lovely village in heart of the vast, wild woods. It is a well-known center for the hunting sport. Not so well known is that it is the central home of a large tribe of werebears. It is a good community of peaceful werebeasts, who have resisted the corrupting influences of the Red Death by staying in their secluded town, well away from most of humanity.

One day, while the heroes are in Bialowieza, the Red Death finally makes its presence known: Two little children are found mutilated in the woods just near their home. They were not lycanthropes, but the werebears take the tragedy very seriously.

The villagers call for a wolf hunt; all the town’s hunters participate, and the heroes are invited to join in as well. Officially, it succeeds; a wolf is hunted down and killed. But then, to the horror of all the heroes present, the wolf’s corpse reverts into that of a naked young woman. The villagers of Bialowieza all handle the unnatural incident stoically: “It is Poldasie (Poland); strange things happen all the time.” But now it’s war. Enraged by the loss of one of his ‘children,’ Kryniewicki vows to return for his vengeance. The heroes will encounter new “accidents,” new hunts, and new secrets, until the escalating hostilities explode into a bloody slaughter between the two werebeast sides.

This scenario can also provide the heroes with werebear friends; very useful allies.

## Kabbala vs. Fangs

Rabbi Fiedorow paid for summoning up the horrors with his own life. Years later, the new rabbi (also a skilled Kabbala master) Iwo Swida, with the aid of the well-trained mystic Dariush Hrymayllo, decides to end matters with Kryniewicki, once and for all. They are looking for all help they can get, and the heroes are near at hand. Iwo and Dariush barely know what Kryniewicki is, but have some meager plans to defeat the beast. However, Kryniewicki has a large pack of 12 to 14 werewolves, all of whom will die to defend their leader. Is it possible to persuade the extra-planar horrors to help? Or perhaps other lycanthropes? Or Russian mayor Iwan Poznansky and his garrison of regulars?

A good scenario to finish with Jan Kryniewicki, once and for all.

## Ravenloft

There are a few ways Jan Kryniewicki can be converted into a Ravenloft campaign:

- ◆ He may step into the Mists and find himself in Kartakass. In that domain, he becomes a rebel against the wolfweres. Harkon Lukas will try to hunt him down, more for the joy of the hunt than any overt desire to kill him.
- ◆ He may be a native of the Demiplane of Dread, an agent sent by Azalin to cause unrest in Falkovnia.
- ◆ He is a domain lord. His domain, Haynowka, is a nearly endless, dark forest where he rules everything. In the heart of the forest lies his lair, a community of werewolves pretending to be the villagers of Zabudow.

**Further Reading:** The town of Bialystok appears in the *Crossroads of Gothic Earth* netbook.

# BITES~THE~RATTLESNAKE

by Andrew C. Wyatt

“O bury the hatchet, irascible Red,  
F or peace is a blessing,” the White Man said.  
T he Savage concurred, and that weapon interred,  
W ith imposing rites, in the White Man's head.

*John L ukkas.*

**As quoted by Ambrose Bierce**  
*The Devil's Dictionary (1911)*

## Biography

Bites-the-Rattlesnake is a rare example of a powerful accidental mummy. A sadistic Amerindian chieftain in life, the coming of the Red Death stirred his uniquely preserved flesh to walk again. In undeath, he seeks the only thing that brought him pleasure in life: wanton destruction and murder.

## Appearance

Bites-the-Rattlesnake looks much as he did when interred in the Black Warrior Caverns. He is a human male of early middle age, standing five feet seven inches tall. Though of average stature, his athletic build is thickly muscled. He has a strong, handsome brow and dark, full lips. His cold, black eyes burn with manic bloodlust. Innumerable swirling tattoos cover his ruddy skin. His sleek, jet-black hair is trimmed into a narrow mohawk, except for a long braid which falls down the center of his back.

Bites-the-Rattlesnake's dress reflects his aboriginal culture, though his garb is perhaps a bit mundane for a chieftain. He wears only a simple breechcloth, colorfully decorated with painting and quillwork. He is bare-chested, save a woven blanket draped across his shoulder and wrapped around his waist. His earlobes are distended with large bone plugs, and a plume of owl feathers is pinned to his braided hair.

Upon close inspection, Bites-the-Rattlesnake's undead nature become evident. His mottled flesh is slightly puffy and seeps dank water at the slightest pressure. He carries the vague odor of minerals and dried fish.

## Bites~the~Rattlesnake

### Cave Mummy, Chaotic Evil

<b>Armor Class</b>	2	<b>Str</b>	18/00
<b>Movement</b>	12	<b>Dex</b>	15
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	9+3	<b>Con</b>	17
<b>Hit Points</b>	70	<b>Int</b>	15
<b>THAC0</b>	13	<b>Wis</b>	10
<b>Morale</b>	19	<b>Chr</b>	8
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	3/2 or 2	<b>XP</b>	7,000
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	2d8 (unarmed) or 1d6+6 (club) / 1d4+6 (dagger)		

### Special Attacks

Crippling touch, Fear aura, Command undead, Summon 3d4 snakes, Weapon specialization

### Special Defenses

Rejuvenation, +1 weapons to hit, Immune to cold attacks, Resistant to fire attacks, Undead immunities

### Special Vulnerabilities

Electrical attacks, Holy water, Aversion to elderly bones, Warded by fluid from a pregnant woman, Controlled by owl feathers

## Background

Over four centuries ago, Bites-the-Rattlesnake was born in the region that would become central Tennessee. The proud Indian village where he lived was nestled in the curl of the Tennessee River, near the base of the Cumberland Mountains. The name of his tribe has been lost to the mists of time, as they vanished long before

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: GOTHIC EARTH

Spanish and French explorers penetrated beyond the Appalachians. By the 1890s, a secluded collection of mounds is all that remains of the place they called home.

Bites-the-Rattlesnake was disturbed even as a child. His mother and the other village women were appalled at the boy's preoccupation with killing small animals in the cruelest manner possible. As he grew, Bites-the-Rattlesnake discovered that only larger prey would satisfy him. Although sedentary, pre-Columbian tribes in the southeast warred constantly with one another for territory and resources, and Bites-the-Rattlesnake distinguished himself as a particularly fearless warrior. He delighted in the suffering of his enemies, and became renowned for never taking prisoners alive, much to the disdain of his elders.

Such was Bites-the-Rattlesnake's love of mayhem that he set his sights on a mighty goal: the chieft hood of his village. Once he secured this lofty position, he reasoned, he might wage war for war's sake. Despite the great glory Bites-the-Rattlesnake had acquired, the village elders refused him this honor. He was too young, they said. His mother was not of sufficient noble status. He had not acquired enough wealth to secure the holy insignias that all chieftains must possess. But the elders also recognized the young warrior's soul as one of terrible darkness. The deranged brave responded by murdering the old men in their sleep and having a power-hungry medicine man declare their deaths as the predations of unholy spirits. His own people were too shocked and terrified to respond when Bites-the-Rattlesnake declared himself chief. The bloody clubs of his loyal warriors and the blessing of the shaman quieted dissenting voices. He allayed their fears by promising great glory and plunder for their tribe.

Bites-the-Rattlesnake led his village on a grisly campaign of conquest that lasted nearly a decade. And indeed, his people acquired much territory, riches, and slaves. For a brief period, they expanded into the surrounding regions, absorbing other villages and pressing on with their burgeoning war bands. But for Bites-the-Rattlesnake's people, the price was too great: Countless sons and husbands were slaughtered all for one man's vanity and psychotic urges. When an enemy's knife finally claimed Bites-the-Rattlesnake, his people breathed a sigh of relief. Though he had brought them glory, it was glory smeared in senseless blood.

Bites-the-Rattlesnake was not cremated as most of his people were. Instead, his tribe quickly dressed his body in simple garb and took it to a cave a few miles from the village. The nameless limestone caverns were thought to be a gateway to the Underworld, and the tribe wished to ensure that their evil chieftain quickly departed from the land of the living. A handful of men carried the corpse as deep into the caverns as they dared to go, and

slipped the body into a still, dark pool of water. The village returned to a more peaceful way of life, but did not easily forget the disturbed man who had led their tribe to sorrow. The caves where his mortal form was interred became known as the Black Warrior Caverns.

Bites-the-Rattlesnake might have passed into the memory of a dying race, were it not for one factor. The freezing pool into which his corpse had been placed was almost completely oxygen-depleted, and so decomposition was practically nonexistent. For over four centuries, the body of Bites-the-Rattlesnake lay in the Black Warrior Caverns. Meanwhile, the Red Death was worming its way into the untainted lands of the New World, riding the wave of European explorers who came tentatively at first, but then in droves. As its tendrils snaked across the countryside of this new land, the Red Death encountered Bites-the-Rattlesnake's corpse. It had found a kindred soul in the dead chieftain. Sensing that this spirit of elemental savagery had the potential to spread more chaos and destruction—much more—the Red Death decided to deny the ancient warrior his rest. Tearing his soul from the bleak existence of the afterlife, the Red Death returned Bites-the-Rattlesnake to his nearly pristine shell.

In the late spring of 1891, two over-adventurous young boys skipped school one morning, and stumbled upon the Black Warrior Caverns. Their curiosity prompted them to explore the dank, cold caves for a better part of the day. Though the nooks and crannies of the Caverns were nearly endless, through some foul twist of fate the boys came across the pool where Bites-the-Rattlesnake lay slumbering. Their presence interrupted that slumber. The boys' curiosity turned to horror as a grimacing red savage rose from the water and lurched towards them. Nearly a quarter of a mile below the surface, no one could hear their screams.

Bites-the-Rattlesnake is greatly shocked at the changes time has wrought on his homeland. The green, rugged land he knew is gone. His tribe is gone, and the hills are overrun by strange pale people. He is disturbed by the gibbering white devils, with their odd magics and metal tools, but is eager to see them bleed and scream. Since awakening, he has begun to make greater use of his realized abilities. In particular, he has been utilizing his power to command undead to enslave ghouls, wights and weaker ghosts into his own unliving army. Currently, he is using the Black Warrior Caverns as a staging ground for raids on graveyards (for undead fodder) and towns (for victims) in the area around McMinnville, Tennessee. He will inevitably move on when he has amassed enough undead warriors to tackle more populated areas, such as Murfreesboro or Nashville...

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: GOTHIC EARTH

## Personality

In life, Bites-the-Rattlesnake was a bloodthirsty and erratic man—undeath has not improved him. Unlike many ancient dead, he has taken a keen interest in the world he awakened to. He views modern Tennessee as a landscape ripe for destruction at his cold, clammy hands. His lust for power and chilling confidence could be considered megalomania, but his pride always takes a back seat to his deep-rooted psychosis. Everything the chieftain does is directed at allowing him to spill as much blood as possible, as doing so gives him great pleasure. Although not terribly charismatic, he leads effectively through intimidation and promises of power and mayhem. Thus, he has attracted a growing group of undead who delight in the opportunity to destroy the living.

## Combat

Bites-the-Rattlesnake's touch does not cause the mummy rot of most ancient dead. Instead, he inflicts a terrible crippling disease which resembles cerebral palsy. Victims of an unarmed attack lose one point of Dexterity each day as their bodies succumb to paralyzing tremors. Furthermore, every two points of Dexterity lost cause a cumulative -1 penalty to all ability checks and attacks rolls. After four days, spellcasting becomes impossible. Within 1d6+3 days, the victim becomes permanently paralyzed. Though the disease is not fatal, victims often die from neglect. Before complete paralysis, cure disease, free action, and heal can remove the symptoms. Remove paralysis has no effect. After the disease becomes permanently crippling, only heal has any effect.

Anyone who gazes upon Bites-the-Rattlesnake is overcome with irrational fear. Victims must save vs. spell at a -3 penalty or immediately flee as if they had failed a fear check (See "Flee" under The Effects of Failure, *Domains of Dread* pg 143). Humans do not gain the usual +2 bonus against a mummy's fear aura, and a group must have ten individuals for its members to gain a +1 bonus.

Bites-the-Rattlesnake can command up to 18 Hit Dice of undead as a 9th-level priest. He can also summon 3d4 poisonous snakes, although his control over them is primarily limited to instructing them to attack opponents.

A deadly warrior in life, Bites-the-Rattlesnake retains his combat prowess in death. He may strike twice in a round every other round of combat. He attacks with a +3 bonus to hit and a +6 damage bonus. Due to his specialization, when wielding a club or dagger, he can attack twice a round, and his attack and damage bonuses increase to +4 and +7 respectively.

Bites-the-Rattlesnake can only be struck by magical weapons of +1 or greater enchantment. Even then, such enchanted weapons inflict one half their base damage (including nonmagical bonuses from Strength and specialization) rounded down, plus their full magical bonus. Nonmagical and magical cold (including elemental attacks) have no effect on him, and nonmagical fire is similarly ineffective. Like all undead, Bites-the-Rattlesnake is immune to sleep, charm, hold, and life-affecting spells. He may rejuvenate himself by first resting for one full day, after which he begins regaining hit points at a rate of 12 per hour of rest. After rejuvenating, he must rest for an additional hour.

The undead chieftain is not without his weaknesses, however. Bites-the-Rattlesnake is completely vulnerable to nonmagical and magical electricity, and takes +1 point of damage per die from magical electrical attacks. A vial of holy water inflicts 1d6 damage on him. Apparently due to his hatred of his own village elders in life, he has an aversion to the bones of an elderly male (over 60 years old at death). When presented with even a single bone, he may not approach within 25 feet of the bearer. Perhaps because of its significance as a symbol of new life, the blood or amniotic fluid or a pregnant woman is a powerful ward against Bites-the-Rattlesnake's movement. He may not pass through a portal sealed with such liquid, cross a line or circle of it on the ground, or approach within 40 feet of a vial's worth. Bites-the-Rattlesnake's greatest weakness, however, is the plume of owl feathers pinned to back of his hair, a symbol of his royal position. Someone who wishes to control the undead chieftain must seize this insignia, just as he seized the rulership for himself centuries ago. If the feathers are removed, the bearer may command him for 2d4 turns. Bites-the-Rattlesnake remains under the bearer's control as long as they are within three miles of one another, but must be present for the bearer to issue commands.

## Adventure Ideas

Bites-the-Rattlesnake can prove to be a challenging foe. PCs who are used to more lethargic, world-weary mummies may assume him to be some sort of vampire, necromancer, or aboriginal death knight. Even if the party puzzles out just what sort of creature he is, they may be shocked by the aggressive, murderous character of the ancient chieftain. Most of the initial interaction with Bites-the-Rattlesnake will be through his undead minions. However, the chieftain's bloodlust is such that he will always appear eventually to meet them face-to-face on the field of battle.



# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: GOTHIC EARTH

- ◆ A stretch of old Confederate railroad in the area of McMinnville is plagued by attacks from packs of ghouls and wights. The undead may be Amerindians which Bites-the-Rattlesnake commandeered from a nearby haunted burial ground, or perhaps the residents of a village cemetery not too far from the Black Warrior Caverns. Spurned by a series of recent nocturnal attacks, the PCs are brought in to investigate by a railroad baron, who is willing to pay handsomely to keep his business running smoothly. More dramatically, the PCs can be introduced to the railroad's plight when traveling on it themselves. A nocturnal battle on a screaming locomotive should rattle even the toughest soldiers and roughnecks.
- ◆ Rumors of diamonds in area saltpeter mines hits central Tennessee. As prospectors pour into the Cumberland foothills, the previously obscure Black Warrior Caverns are discovered. A series of murders and panicked sightings of a "red savage" prompts the local sheriff to enlist the help of the PCs in rooting out the trouble. This plot hook could set the stage for a thrilling and terrifying subterranean adventure, as Bites-the-Rattlesnake and his minions withdraw into the Caverns until the time is right to strike. Of course, the stories about the diamonds are probably wild speculation and hearsay... but who can say for sure?
- ◆ While traveling through backwoods country, the PCs stumble upon a deserted town, where evidence indicates a recent bloodbath. The only survivor is a minister who rambles about a legion of dead men. Bites-the-Rattlesnake's army is on the warpath, but the victims are nowhere to be found. As night falls, however, the villagers emerge from the surrounding woodlands—now undead creatures ready to follow Bites-the-Rattlesnake's commands. They join the Amerindian undead who slaughtered them, and head towards the nearest neighboring town. The party must stop this rampaging horde before it reaches a large population center.
- ◆ While battling lycanthropes or carnivorous plants in the forest, the heroes are assisted by a Chickasaw or Muskogee shaman. He remained behind when his village was relocated to Indian Territory because he sensed that a great evil had awakened in the area. Though he is a member of the Nation of Nine, the medicine man does not want to see innocents slaughtered, and he needs the help of courageous white folk in putting to rest an ancient undead chieftain. Unfortunately, those who would know this chieftain's weaknesses have been dead for centuries. The PCs must escort the shaman to Old Stone Fort or a similar mound formation in the area to

commune with the spirit of one of Bites-the-Rattlesnake's tribesmen. Of course, they'll have to contend with wights, crypt servants, and maybe some aboriginal horror no white man has ever seen.

# LORD REYNALDO & LADY GISELLA BERRA

by Matthew Ball

Of those four-footed kinds, himself now one,  
Now other, as their shape serv'd best his end,  
Nearer to view his prey, and, unespied,  
To mark what of their state he more might learn  
By word or action mark'd. About them round  
A lion now he stalks with fiery glare;  
Then as a tiger, who by chance hath spied  
In some purlieu two gentle fawns at play. . .

**John Milton**

*Paradise Lost Book IV (1667)*

## Biography

Not all monsters prowl with tooth and claw and the taint of the night—but the very best ones do.

Evil is often discontent to lurk in the shadowy corners of the globe, and the lure of the newly developing world with its new peoples, places, and chances to meddle can often entice the foulest of creatures out into the light.

## Appearance

The Lord and Lady Berra are often found together at high society functions in the Newport, Rhode Island area. Lady Gisella is in her mid-30s and has a deep olive complexion, with long flowing golden-brown hair that reaches past her shoulders, and eyes that are a striking amber-green. Lady Berra has a slender physique, yet she is over six feet tall and thus appears a dominating figure around the other women of Newport society. For such a tall woman, she moves with an unexpected grace. Lady Gisella usually appears in fashionable attire, which is somewhat more conservative than the norm, and she

tends to favor fabrics of gold and black, highlighted by exquisite jewelry.

Reynaldo Berra, husband to Lady Gisella, is slightly older than his wife, but leaves no less an imposing impression. Lord Berra is perhaps 6'3" and very fit, with corded muscle visible in his neck and hands that hint at an impressive physique. He too has long hair, but unlike his wife, his hair is both receding from his forehead and graying throughout. Lord Berra also sports a thick gray handlebar mustache that he seems particularly proud of, as it is always trimmed immaculately. Reynaldo has a stern countenance which is made even more severe by the distinguished style of clothes he sports—high collars, full black suits, and a small frameless monocle which Lord Berra keeps attached to his person by means of a delicate silver chain.

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: GOTHIC EARTH

## Lord Reynaldo Berra

### 7<sup>th</sup>-level Paka Soldier, Chaotic Evil

<b>Armor Class</b>	6	<b>Str</b>	18
<b>Movement</b>	15	<b>Dex</b>	18
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	7	<b>Con</b>	16
<b>Hit Points</b>	60	<b>Int</b>	12
<b>THAC0</b>	14	<b>Wis</b>	11
<b>Morale</b>	12	<b>Chr</b>	11
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	2	<b>XP</b>	1,000
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	1-6/1-6 or by weapon		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Springing		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	Healing		
<b>Magic Resistance</b>	20%		

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Sabre; Dagger; Carbine; Pistol (Navy); Pistol (Army); Rapier

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Blind Fighting; Marksmanship (Carbine); Running; Endurance; Language, Modern (Spanish); Language, Modern (Arabic)

## Lady Gisella Berra

### 8<sup>th</sup>-level Paka Tradesman, Chaotic Evil

<b>Armor Class</b>	6	<b>Str</b>	15
<b>Movement</b>	15	<b>Dex</b>	18
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	8	<b>Con</b>	15
<b>Hit Points</b>	40	<b>Int</b>	16
<b>THAC0</b>	17	<b>Wis</b>	12
<b>Morale</b>	12	<b>Chr</b>	16
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	2	<b>XP</b>	1,000
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	1-6/1-6 or by weapon		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Springing		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	Healing		
<b>Magic Resistance</b>	20%		

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Dagger; Rapier; Whip; Pistol (Derringer)

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Climb Walls; Tightrope Walking; Language, Modern (Spanish); Language, Modern (Arabic); Etiquette; Savoir-faire; Set Snares; Tumbling

## Background

The Lord and Lady Berra are relatively recent additions to the affluent circle of New England blue-blooded families. According to popular rumor, they were originally nobility, exiled from Northern Africa, who have arrived in America by way of Spain. The Berras have moved into a large, walled estate—Granitegate, on

the outskirts of Boston, and have done a remarkable job at integrating themselves into a social circle which can be snobbish and elitist at best.

What the citizens of Newport, and most of the world, do not realize is that the Berras are both pakas—a race of feline shapeshifters. The Berras are extremely talented and skilled at passing themselves off as humans and fitting into human society. In truth, they have lived in both Europe and Africa adapting perfectly to their surroundings in both places. One key to their successful survival is the fact that in Gothic Earth pakas are for the most part an unknown race. The few references to their people that do exist are mostly found in the folklore and stories of the various tribes of North Africa, where it appears that the pakas are most prominent. Since the colonial expansion into Africa by the European nations, the pakas have been lured by the attraction offered by other nations and have used their skills at moving undetected amongst humans to spread themselves out into the greater portion of the known world. Fortunately, the pakas are still very widespread and their numbers are not concentrated in any one portion of the globe—as of yet.

The Berras are relatively old in terms of the paka lifespan. Over the years they have become exceptional in passing themselves off as humans. In the course of their charade, the Berras have accumulated a great deal of wealth and influence that enables them to partake in a lifestyle which they find particularly exhilarating. Not only do the wealthy get to lord themselves over the lower classes, but they are also surrounded with beauty and weave the tapestries of their life with many deceptions and outright lies. Combined, these factors make such a lifestyle irresistible to a paka and the Berras see themselves as participating in some grand game of deceit where they are no less than grandmasters.

## Personality

Reynaldo Berra usually appears a very strict and stern man who radiates an air of unmistakable authority. Reynaldo makes no attempt to hide the scorn he feels for those who he believes are below his station—constantly berating those he dislikes and passing on scandalous and damaging gossip to the hungry ears of back-stabbers. As a paka, Reynaldo is extremely cruel and he takes great pleasure in making his victims suffer needlessly. He is extremely resentful of the human race, and although he is mostly cautious in his masquerade, he is prone to make careless displays of his feline nature when he is excited or angered.

Lady Gisella is more approachable than her husband and as a result the men and women of high society constantly surround her. Gisella loves beauty and

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: GOTHIC EARTH

carefully cultivates her own exotic looks. As a result, she is often the center of attention, a fact that the Lady relishes. Gisella tends to be a flirt with many men—sometimes in a discrete fashion, sometimes blatantly. This tends to enrage her husband each time he catches word or sight of the Lady’s actions. Like her husband, Gisella looks down on humans as a lesser race, but where her husband sees the human population as prey, Lady Berra regards humans as playthings—great fun, but prone to breaking easily. Still, she enjoys terrorizing a victim as much as Lord Reynaldo and when her feline nature is revealed she is no less cruel a predator than her husband.

## Combat

While posing as humans, the Berras will refrain from combat as much as possible. If confronted, they will laugh off or ignore their accusers or any attempts to start a confrontation. The Berras have hired bodyguards who are loyal and skilled enough to prevent any unwanted attention. Though both Reynaldo and Gisella are skilled with a number of weapons, unless they are in dire straits they will not resort to violence. In fact, the Berras will even turn to legitimate organizations such as local police forces in an effort to remove troublemakers from their vicinity, rather than do anything that would endanger their charade. Be assured however that the Lord and Lady will not forget such an affront, and they will quickly take steps to privately deal with anyone who dares insult them in such a manner.

If confronted alone or on their terms in an isolated place such as Granitegate, the Berras will not hesitate to reveal their true nature and attack. They will use their claws as their preferred weapons and slowly whittle their opponents down gouge by gouge. During such situations, the Berras will take full advantage of their skills and natural abilities. During the entire period of combat both Reynaldo and Gisella will taunt their opponents and often let the victim think they are winning or escaping before they pounce one final time for the kill. As pakas only eat meat, the disposal of the bodies is usually not a problem.

## THAT PEOPLE

This adventure is mainly an investigative scenario that emphasizes discovery over actual confrontation. Ideally there will be two to three player characters of levels 5-7. If the players are of a greater number or higher level, the paka community can be much more established in the area and the number of pakas who will rally with the Berras against the players can be increased.

For further information on pakas and their society, please refer to *Ravenloft Monstrous Compendium III*.

## Background

The Lord and Lady Berra have recently settled into Granitegate—a large walled manor on the outskirts of Newport. On the grounds of this estate they have preyed upon a number of the residents of the city who had the ill fortune to have been selected by the Berras as a target for their hunt. During this same period of time, the Berras have used their skills at social manipulation to ingrain themselves into the upper echelon of the Newport “nouveau riche” society, aided by a combination of their wealth and their expertise at bending people to their wishes.

Recently a hunt of a human victim on the grounds of Granitegate had the misfortune of going terribly awry for the Berras. A young girl, Molly Alexander, worked for the Berras as a serving maid since they had set up residence in the city. Although she considered her employers eccentric, she performed admirably at her job—one Molly considered a godsend as she was poor, unmarried and without family in the city. Two nights ago, the Berras dismissed all their employees for the evening except for Molly, whom they bid remain behind. Once the estate was deserted, Molly was called into a large sitting room where the Lady Gisella began extinguishing the lights while telling Molly that they were about to play a little game. The terrified girl was told that if she, Molly, could make it off the grounds of Granitegate she would win her life. If not, well, there was no need to go into that. At this point the Lady Berra extinguished the last light, and the room was filled with inky blackness save the scant illumination that came through the great windows. In a fit of inspiration, Molly flung a nearby candle holder at the shadowy form of Reynaldo Berra who was silently pacing nearby. As the Lord Berra howled in pain, Molly smashed through the window and ran for the estate walls with all her might.

Somehow, Molly made it to the walls, climbed over, and ran down the streets towards the nearest houses. She was found, bleeding and hysterical, by a passing constable and taken to a local hospital.

To make matters worse, while the Lord and Lady Berra searched the neighborhood for their escaped prey, Lady Gisella was approached by a young man who unwittingly offered her help. In her furor, Lady Berra turned on the young man and slaughtered him right in the middle of the street. Fearing a response to his screams from the local residents or the police, Gisella fled back to Granitegate where she and Reynaldo have sulked in a state of high anxiety for the past two days.

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: GOTHIC EARTH

## The Adventure Begins

The players may be brought into the current scenario through a number of fashions. Any player whose hero has contacts amongst the local police force, or is playing as a detective character, can be informed of a mysterious corpse that was recently discovered in a high-class neighborhood on the outskirts of the city. The body, that of 27-year old Geoffrey Williams, does not appear to have been the victim of a criminal attack as he still possessed a number of valuables, including money found on his person after he was discovered. The wounds on the corpse also seem to have been caused by the mauling attacks of some wild animal rather than those of a weapon. Police have received no reports of any strange animals in the area and the death is currently being regarded as suspicious in nature.

A fellow colleague who wishes to show off an intriguing case currently at a local hospital can contact characters that have a background of a medical, psychological, or academic nature. The patient is none other than Molly Alexander, who is still in a state of extreme shock and confusion over her experience. Molly has a very tenuous grip on her sanity, and has been unable to give a clear account of what happened to her. Molly is unable to sleep without waking from nightmares, and will suddenly have screaming fits where she rants about being hunted by a lady with glowing eyes. The doctors have not even been able to discover Molly's name so her situation and background are a complete mystery. In her current state, Molly will be of little help but through a judicious use of medical or psychological skills, mesmerism, or magic her sanity may be restored over time to a point where more of her story can be revealed.

Finally, characters who have a journalistic background can become aware of either or both of these events as local newspapers will be running blurbs on both situations, i.e.: *Mutilated Victim of Animal Attack Found* and *Who Is Mystery Lady at St. Joseph's Hospital?*

## First Impressions

Somehow the characters receive invitations to a high-scale society function in the Newport area. Although this soiree can be used to develop many further adventure ideas, as a wide range of important figures will be in attendance, the guests who will perhaps be of most interest to the heroes are Lord Reynaldo and Lady Gisella Berra. Since this event is of such importance to the socialites of the city, the Berras could not resist their

invitations, and show up to continue insinuating themselves into the lives of the upper class.

The PCs will first become aware of the Berras as the doorman announces their arrival. Most heads will turn towards the couple who is dressed resplendently in formal attire. As the evening goes on, the Berras—especially Lady Gisella—are constantly surrounded by people who practically hang on to their every word.

Any sharp-eyed PC who is watching the Berras may notice a couple of unusual things (roll a successful check in Intelligence or against Etiquette skills). The first is that, throughout the course of the evening, the Berras eat nothing but meat. They will even go so far as to discretely dismantle hors d'oeuvres to get to a meat filling.

Secondly, there seems to be one gentleman at the gathering who seems to be making a particular effort to avoid the Berras. This man is Arif Abada, a diplomatic envoy from Morocco who is in Newport conducting trade negotiations with a number of companies in the city. If approached, and asked why he is avoiding the Berras or what he thinks of them, Abada will pull the hero aside and, while making signs to ward away evil, tell the character that he is certain the Berras are of *that people*—the ones who must not be named. Further pressing will get Abada to detail a legend of his people that tells of a race of shapeshifters who live in the deserted ruins of the Sahara. Allah curses these people for their transgressions. Their name cannot be spoken by the faithful, so they are known as *that people*. This race is supposed to live unknown amongst people and hunt humans in the form of lions, killing with great savagery as they protect their masquerade. Arif is certain that he recognizes the Berras as members of this race, and will have nothing further to do with them.

### **Arif Abada, 3<sup>rd</sup>-level tradesman (Dandy):**

AC 8; MV 12; hp 9; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; ML average (9); AL LN.

S 12 D 16 C 13 I 14 W 11 Ch 15

Personality: xx

## The Hunt Begins

If the characters have their suspicions aroused by now and begin to check into the background of the Berras, it will not take long before word reaches the Berras of the PCs' interest. Should the PCs still need a further development to convince them of the sinister nature of the Berras, Arif Abada can mysteriously disappear. When the PCs look into this mystery, they find out that Abada was called from some business meetings to receive a delivery from two men. A witness' description of one of the men sounds a lot like the Lord Berra's

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: GOTHIC EARTH

footman. Abada stepped into a carriage and was not seen again.

At this stage of the adventure, the PCs will be followed by a number of cats wherever they venture. At first this may not arouse any suspicions in the characters, as any large city has a number of stray and domestic cats that prowl its streets, especially a port city such as Newport. After a while, characters may start to wonder about the large number of cats that seem to be lurking around their residences or places where they travel. If any of the player characters own a cat, it may exhibit strange behavior. The Berras will use their ability to control cats to keep an eye on the characters' actions, and if the chance offers itself, they will command the cats to attack the characters. A cat owner may find an oil lamp knocked over in the middle of the night, starting a fire in his house, while a lone traveler may be attacked in an alley by a horde of cats that will claw and bite him. After such an incident, the PCs may note a black carriage driving away from the scene and perhaps glimpse a face through the carriage windows that reminds them of Reynaldo Berra.

**Cat, Domestic (2d6+8):** AC 6; MV 9; HD ½; hp 2; THAC0 20; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1 (claws/bite); SA rear claw rake (1-2); SD burst of speed (MV 18 for 1d10 rounds); SZ T (1' tall); ML average (9); XP 7.

## At Granitigate

Eventually, circumstances should bring the PCs to the Berra's estate, Granitigate. The layout of Granitigate is left to the DM's discretion, but ideally the grounds are large with a wide variety of landscaping: trees, shrubbery, ponds, walks, etc. There should also be a carriage house and stable as well as perhaps a guest-house or servants' quarters. Some possible sources for manors that may be modified by a creative DM include the Renier Estate as detailed in the *Realm of Terror* boxed set, or Shadowborn Manor as detailed in the *Darklords* accessory.

There are several important factors to note about the arrival of the PCs at Granitigate. Firstly, if the PCs arrive during daylight hours the estate will appear to be functioning normally, with servants visible both in the house and on the grounds. Realizing that a confrontation at this time would not work to their advantage, the Berras will not receive any visitors. PCs will be told politely, but firmly, that the Lord and Lady are away, but the heroes are invited to leave a card so the Berras may call on them. The servants will not allow the PCs to wait on estate grounds for the Berras' return.

Secondly, inside the coach house is a carriage the PCs will recognize as being very much the same as the one that has been spotted near several of the suspicious events which have occurred near the party.

Finally, there are again an inordinate number of cats prowling the estate grounds. Everywhere the characters look they will spot cats of varying sizes and colors—under bushes, lying in the sun, near the doors of the estate, and so on. These cats will not attack the PCs, but there will not be a moment on the grounds when the PCs are not within eyeshot of at least a single cat, thus allowing the Berras to keep tabs on the PCs' actions.

Circumstances will drastically change if the PCs come to Granitigate on the Berras' terms. Ideal situations for the Berras would include the PCs responding to an invitation to Granitigate, delivered by a servant, with a particular time and date—if the players respond to such an invitation, the Berras will be very prepared for the springing of their trap. The Berras will send such an invitation if they know that the PCs are actively asking questions about them or are expressing suspicions about the motivations or character of the Lord and Lady. Alternatively, if the players choose to make a visit to Granitigate in the evening hours or dead of night, the Berras may take advantage of this fact, and launch an offensive against the players.

Reynaldo & Gisella usually follow a set pattern with all their prey that they will again follow with the players if at all possible. The hunt usually begins inside the manor, where the Berras will entertain their guests in a large room lit with lamps or candles. As conversation progresses, the Berras will extinguish illumination in the room until the room is very dark. At some point in the conversation—especially if someone expresses concern over the actions of the couple—one or both of the Berras will turn on the player characters, suddenly hissing and snarling, and with all their feline aspect revealed. Teeth and claws will be elongated, noses blunted, and whiskers and fur revealed. (This revelation will probably be an appropriate time for the DM to call for a fear check, especially if the true nature of Lord and Lady Berra was still uncertain). If possible, any remaining lights in the room will be extinguished and the hunt will begin.

The feline nature of the paka gives the Berras a distinct advantage in near-dark conditions so while the characters are fumbling around, the Berras will be able to close for attacks and retreat out of harm's way unhindered. The Berras greatly enjoy taunting their victims and playing with them. One tactic will be for one of the couple to lure the unsuspecting into a place where the other paka can pounce on the victim from behind and both of the attackers can disappear again into the manor or the grounds. The Berras are very intelligent and coordinated in their attacks and the DM should play them

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: GOTHIC EARTH

to the fullest of their abilities (i.e., springing from shadows for surprise, controlling nearby cats to attack and hinder characters, etc.). This should not be an easy fight for the characters and the Berras will do all that is possible to prevent the players from walking off of the grounds of Granitegate, as such a resolution would endanger their charade. Should the situation become desperate enough however, the Berras will attempt to flee, leaving the estate and disappearing into the night.

## Recurrence

The Lord and Lady Berra will not forget such an affront as the one committed by the PCs. As a species dominated by a desire for vengeance, the Berras will spend some time plotting a way in which they can have their revenge upon the players. This would be doubly so if one of the Berras is killed by the characters while the other escapes. In such a situation, there will be no other goal in the life of the surviving Berra but to eliminate the party from the face of the Gothic Earth. No measure will seem too extreme, and no means will be spared in assuring that this goal becomes a reality. The Berras can become a long-running nemesis for the party that crosses them, continually hunting them across the globe.

## Other Uses

Although designed for a Gothic Earth setting, the Berras can easily be transposed to Ravenloft. With their natural talents and abilities, pakas can pass as members of almost any culture, and thus could easily fit into just about any domain in Ravenloft. In such a setting however, it is likely that the number of pakas in an area would be greater, with perhaps even a tribe of pakas all hiding amidst the population of an area.

It would also be relatively easy for a DM to move the estate of Granitegate to a number of other locales on Gothic Earth. Possibilities that would work well include the European cities of London, Vienna, and Rome.

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: GOTHIC EARTH

## LEONARDO DA VINCI

by Jarrod Lowe

While I thought that I was learning how to live, I have been learning how to die.

### Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519)

#### Biography

Along with the great Doctor Abraham van Helsing, the famed artisan Leonardo da Vinci has become Gothic Earth's greatest investigator of the paranormal, but at a price... that of his own soul.

#### Appearance

Leonardo da Vinci has changed very little in a physical regard since his transformation into a vampire. His long grey mane of hair is disheveled, and his white beard is long and bushy. He tends to wear long dark cloaks and robes, preferring dark violets and indigos, but occasionally he will don deep crimson.

#### Leonardo da Vinci

**371 year old Very Old Nosferatu Vampire**  
**20<sup>th</sup>-level scholar, Chaotic Neutral**

<b>Armor Class</b>	1	<b>Str</b>	18/00
<b>Movement</b>	12	<b>Dex</b>	16
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	20	<b>Con</b>	17
<b>Hit Points</b>	62	<b>Int</b>	18
<b>THAC0</b>	11	<b>Wis</b>	17
<b>Morale</b>	15	<b>Chr</b>	14
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	1	<b>XP</b>	11,000
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	1d6+6		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	See below		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	+2 or better weapons to hit		
<b>Special Vulnerabilities</b>	See below		
<b>Magic Resistance</b>	Nil		

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Rapier, Knife, Sword-Cane, Long Sword

**Nonweapon Proficiencies:** Academician (b), Italian (native language), Artisan (sculptor), Artisan (painter), Engineering, Astronomy, Biology, Music (violin), Physics, Language (English), Language (French), Language (Spanish), Language (Japanese), Etiquette, History (Art), History (European),

Religion (Catholicism), Geology, Forbidden Lore (Vampires), Forbidden Lore (the Red Death).

#### Background

The Renaissance painter, sculptor and inventor, Leonardo da Vinci was born the illegitimate son of a Florentine notary and a peasant woman. Raised by his grandparents, Leonardo received the finest education one could have in 1469 Florence. Rapidly he advanced both socially and intellectually, and by 1472 he entered into the painters guild of Florence. By 1478 Leonardo had established himself as an independent master.

During his lifetime Leonardo excelled in many different fields, from his paintings "Mona Lisa" and "The Last Supper," to his scientific endeavors such as his works in anatomy and meteorology. Later on in his life Leonardo spent time with the qabal known as the Phoenix. Though he became an official member, he saw the group as a collection of doom-sayers and did not completely agree with their view of the world (though he has been historically linked with them as possible founding member). Leonardo spent the last few years of his life in the service of Francis I, King of France. He died in Amboise, while working for the king.

Leonardo's death due to blood loss, though unusual, wasn't seen as mysterious following a lingering illness that had plagued him for months. He awoke days after his funeral with a coffin, suffering from an uncanny hunger. When the great master went looking for sustenance he discovered a mysterious individual waiting for him outside the tomb. The man identified himself as Alexander, a vampire who wished to preserve Leonardo's genius for all time. Outraged by his failure to heed the Phoenix's warnings and disgusted by what he'd become Leonardo fled into the night, eventually succumbing to his hunger on a pitiful street urchin.

Filled with despair over what he was and what he had done, Leonardo stayed clear of human beings for years to come. Soon Leonardo began hiding himself away in bowels of libraries, studying the macabre in all



# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: GOTHIC EARTH

forms as well as passing on misinformation about his life, death and unlife in order to distance himself from possible enemies. Leonardo researched all he possibly could about what he had become, subsisting mainly on the sewer rats that plagued Paris. Soon Leonardo began traveling throughout the world searching for more information detailing his curse, all the while staying as far away from human beings (his natural prey) as he possibly could. After many lifetimes he became an expert on not only the dread vampire but the vile entity behind the world's corruption: the Red Death. After discovering information pertaining to the Defiance, Leonardo began a new quest in life, to rebuild the vast knowledge once contained in the library of Alexandria. The knowledge that would lead to the ultimate destruction of the Red Death.

As recently as 1865 Leonardo was in Paris to deliver information he has collected on the Red Death to his hidden library. Housed deep within the Louvre, in a long-forgotten hall, Leonardo has amassed the largest single dossier currently existing on the Red Death. Though aware of the supposed "Second Alexandria," the Red Death has never been able to observe or hinder the efforts of Leonardo. In fact, the tales of him existing as a vampire and plotting against the force that gave him unlife, are seen as fables in the eyes of the Red Death's lesser minions. Leonardo should be considered the ultimate wild card on all of Gothic Earth.

## Personality

Though bitter over what he has become, Leonardo has tried to put all that aside in order to dedicate himself to the destruction of the Red Death and its underlings. Unfortunately that is easier said than done.

Not above manipulating mortals into acquiring information for him, Leonardo has developed a network of "agents" who share their findings with him. Using his vampiric *charm* ability, Leonardo formed secret relationships with members of La Lumiere when their sect was founded within the Louvre. Recently he has also made contacts with members of the British Society for Paranormal Research, an occult investigation firm based in London.

In the last fifty years Leonardo has felt the beast within begin to cry out. He has less patience when it comes to human beings, and has found his actions are becoming more and more like those vampires he hunts. Leonardo has come to the decision that if his efforts against the Red Death are unsuccessful by the turn of the century, he will turn over his findings to the British Society For Paranormal Research and La Lumiere. Then he plans to destroy himself, ending the existence of yet another possible menace.

Recently however Leonardo has found himself plagued by a series of blackout spells that render him unable to remember where he has been or what he has done. Usually he wakes up just minutes before the sun rises, in odd locations, feeling strangely invigorated. Following these occurrences Leonardo feels stronger and more powerful than he has in hundreds of years of unlife. Could it be that the beast that dwells within him has finally surfaced, or possibly some other fiendish creature has Leonardo's undoing in mind? Only time will tell.

## Combat

Rarely engaging humans in conflict, Leonardo employs his varied vampiric abilities when forced to fight, including his 18/00 strength and his resistance to any weapon with less than a +2 enchantment. In addition, his *charm* gaze is so powerful that all victims suffer a -3 penalty to the saving throws to resist.

If he must, Leonardo can also attack with his bite; if successful, he can automatically drain 1 point of Con from his victim each round thereafter. However, Leonardo does all he can to resist this dark temptation.

Leonardo can resist sunlight for three rounds, but if he does not remove himself from the sun's rays by the end of the third round, he will be destroyed.

Lastly, da Vinci regenerates 4 hit points per round.

## Adventure Ideas

Leonardo's search for knowledge is never-ending. He employs many investigators to gain information for him, without ever revealing who he is. Using these methods PCs may never learn the true identity of who provides them with funding and secret lore, and that is how Leonardo prefers it.

Leonardo can become known to the PCs if they are able to locate his "Second Alexandria." If they attempt this, then they are probably being manipulated by the Red Death or some of its more powerful minions. If Leonardo becomes aware of their ignorance he may let them live, but then again, he may not.

# BRAS~COUPÉ

by Bil Boozer

O who shall me deliver whole  
From bonds of this tyrannic soul?  
Which, stretch'd upright, impales me so  
That mine own precipice I go;  
And warms and moves this needless frame,  
(A fever could but do the same)  
And, wanting where its spite to try,  
Has made me live to let me die.  
A body that could never rest,  
Since this ill spirit it possest.

**Andrew Marvell**

*A Dialogue Between The Soul And The Body (1681)*

## Biography

True freedom is an elusive goal; sometimes even death cannot provide it. For Bras-Coupé, fugitive slave and victim of betrayal, death freed him from the pain and torments of his short, unusual life, but it imprisoned his soul in even greater torment.

## Appearance

In life, Bras-Coupé was a tall, muscular, dark-skinned man who was missing his left arm. Undead, his brown skin has become dark grey and faintly yellowish. His flesh is rotting and noisome, and close inspection may reveal that a few maggots and small insects have made homes by burrowing into his skin. Despite his constant state of decay, Bras-Coupé retains most of his body and from a distance of 100 feet or more could be mistaken for a living person.

Bras-Coupé can understand English and Creole, and he has a passing knowledge of Spanish. However, his decaying condition has made it difficult for him to converse in these languages, and there is a 30% chance that anything he says will be unintelligible (unless magical means of communication are used). Bras-Coupé can read English, but he is unable to write legibly. As a

zombie lord, he can communicate telepathically with other intelligent undead creatures, and he can speak with undead by touching any particular corpse.

Like most other zombie lords, Bras-Coupé can control any zombie within sight so long as that zombie is not already under the control of a character with 6 or more hit dice or levels; once initiated, this control remains even if Bras-Coupé can no longer see the zombie so long as the zombie remains within 200 yards of the zombie lord. Bras-Coupé cannot use the senses of zombies to learn what is happening in the surrounding area. He can, once per day, *animate dead* to transform a dead creature or character into a zombie; this once per day limit is in addition to characters turned to zombies by his odor of death, as described below. Bras-Coupé cannot use this *animate dead* ability on living creatures.

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: GOTHIC EARTH

## Bras-Coupé (“BRAH kooPAY”)

### Zombie Lord, Chaotic Evil

<b>Armor Class</b>	6	<b>Str</b>	18
<b>Movement</b>	6	<b>Dex</b>	8
<b>Level/Hit Dice</b>	6	<b>Con</b>	11
<b>Hit Points</b>	28	<b>Int</b>	10
<b>THACO</b>	15	<b>Wis</b>	12
<b>Morale</b>	18	<b>Cha</b>	6
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	1	<b>XP</b>	xx
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	2d4		
<b>Special Attacks</b>	See below		
<b>Special Defenses</b>	Spell immunity		
<b>Special Vulnerabilities</b>	See below		
<b>Magic Resistance</b>	Nil		

## Background

Born in 1801, Squier, the man who would later be known as Bras-Coupé, grew up a slave on a plantation in Southwestern Louisiana. A big, broad-shouldered man by the time he reached 20, Squier escaped several times from captivity, and several times he was captured and returned to the man who claimed to own him.

Eventually, at the age of 32, Squier made his final escape; unfortunately, he inadvertently killed the plantation owner's teenage daughter in a fire. Though chased with dogs and rifles, Squier eluded pursuit, and the hunt was abandoned. A heavy price was put on Squier's head, and authorities throughout Louisiana and Mississippi were on the look out for him.

Squier traveled to New Orleans where he hoped the large number of people of many races would conceal him. He also believed that he could obtain help from some of the free black citizens of the city, but he was never able to receive such help. During this time, he met and befriended Francisco Garcia (described elsewhere in *The Forgotten Children*).

In January 1837, two bounty hunters confronted Squier southwest of New Orleans. As Squier turned to flee, the hunters shot him with their buckshot-loaded rifles, wounding his left arm so severely that it was amputated once the bounty hunters had dragged Squier to a hospital. Late that night, Squier climbed out the hospital window and disappeared into the night. His one-armed condition earned him the name “Bras-Coupé,” and it was by this name that he was afterward known. Legends spread through black and white communities in southern Louisiana about the exploits of the one-armed fugitive that no one could capture.

In April, Bras-Coupé was discovered in the swamps west of New Orleans by two New Orleans policemen. They each shot at him and struck him, felling the giant man as he tried to run away. The shots didn't kill Bras-

Coupé, so the policemen beat him until they were sure he was dead. They returned to the city to get others to retrieve the body, but when they returned the body was gone; Bras-Coupé continued to prove harder to kill than the average human, contributing further to his legend.

Finally, in humid July 1837, Bras-Coupé came upon the fishing spot of his old friend, Francisco Garcia. He had sought out his friend because the bullet wounds in his right arm and chest had not been treated and were keeping him in severe pain. At the fishing spot, he was surprised to find a coffin resting on a poorly assembled cairn. Moments later, Garcia arrived. Convinced that Bras-Coupé knew the guilty secret he kept sealed in the coffin, Garcia grabbed an iron anchoring spike from his small boat and stabbed Bras-Coupé twice in the chest and finally once in the throat. Startled and angered at this betrayal, Bras-Coupé cursed Garcia to walk the land eternally as the former slave gasped out his last breaths.

Garcia turned in Bras-Coupé's body in exchange for the reward. The body was displayed publicly on the Place d'Armes, and thousands of city residents flocked to see it. Afterward, it was buried in an unmarked grave. Some nights later, the body was unearthed and a mysterious and powerful Voudou shaman attempted raise Bras-Coupé, but the body which had withstood so much while alive was unable to survive the shock of being brought back to life, and some nights later Bras-Coupé awoke as a zombie lord.

During the 1890s, most New Orleans natives will be familiar with the story of Bras-Coupé, although their memories may not be accurate. Marie LeVeau *mere* was present at the attempt to raise Bras-Coupé from the dead, and she has related this story to her daughter, although her daughter, Marie LeVeau *filie*, is somewhat skeptical. Nonetheless, she will be happy to tell the story to anyone who is willing to pay to hear it. Newspapers from the 1830s will have printed stories about the hunt for and capture of Bras-Coupé; however, these will only be accessible in a major city, such as New Orleans, where encounters with Bras-Coupé are unlikely.

Farmers and land-owners in more rural areas can relate stories of a mysterious fog that comes by night and invariably leaves dead bodies in its wake. These attacks first began, rumor has it, around 1840, and their frequency has grown since then. Some believe the fog is a merely a precursor of the doom that will fall upon the world at the end of the century. Most local and state authorities dismiss rumors of a killer fog as nonsense, and consequently no one has studied the incidents well enough to notice a pattern of movement eastward.

## Personality

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: GOTHIC EARTH

Bras-Coupé remembers little of his former life. Compelled by some force that he has stopped trying to understand, he travels through rural Louisiana and Mississippi slowly spreading terror to its residents. Upon discovering a suitably small settlement, such as an isolated town or plantation home, he usually raises one or two zombies and sends them into the settlement to kill its leaders; often he follows, letting his odor of death protect his zombies. On some nights, he will use his *obscurement* ability to enter settlements in a protective fog, although any zombies he brings with him will not be immune to the fog's effects so he must exert extra effort to controlling them.

In his life, Bras-Coupé wanted most of all to be free. In death, he has the same desire, but he does not understand the power that ties his spirit to his decaying body or how he can escape it. Although he has lost most of his memories of life, he believes that authority figures, specifically plantation owners, were responsible for his previous torments and his current ones, and these make up the bulk of his targets. Once the zombie lord has killed his target, it will usually be 2-6 months before he feels the urge to kill again; in the mean time, he wanders.

Bras-Coupé has an affinity for children and will not go out of his way to kill them, although he has no objection to using them to obtain some other goal. If he witnesses anyone harming a child, then that individual will become his next target.

## Combat

Like other zombie lords, Bras-Coupé's foremost weapon in combat is the odor of death which fills the area within a 30' radius of him. However, its effects are different from those of standard zombie lords. On the first round a character approaches within this radius, he or she must save vs. poison or suffer one of the following effects in the table above.

If forced into combat, Bras-Coupé fights with his one arm, gaining a +1 to-hit bonus and a +2 damage bonus because of his Strength. (These bonuses are not reflected in the zombie lord's statistics listed above.) At will, Bras-Coupé can create *obscurement* as if cast by a 6<sup>th</sup>-level priest; his vision is unaffected by this effect. Any effect that would normally reduce the duration of an *obscurement* spell dissipates the Bras-Coupé's fog effect for 1d3 rounds. Thereafter, he can recall the fog. Any character whose vision is obstructed by the fog gets a -3 initiative modifier and a -2 to attack rolls. Additionally, anyone casting a spell that targets Bras-Coupé must first make a successful attack roll (without

rounds.

<b>4</b>	Character's Strength is reduced by 2d8 to a minimum of 1 for 1d4 rounds; characters whose Strength is reduced to less than 6 are rendered unconscious for 3d6 turns.
<b>5-7</b>	Character loses control of left arm. It hangs loosely and cannot be used normally for 3d10 rounds. Dex is at a -3 penalty for this duration.
<b>8-9</b>	Character is unable to act for 2d4 rounds because of nausea and vomiting.
<b>10-11</b>	Character stunned for 2d8 rounds and afflicted with rotting disease as if touched by a mummy.
<b>12</b>	Character dies and becomes a zombie in 1d6 rounds under the control of Bras-Coupé.

the -2 penalty) or the spell goes awry. (The DM may decide the spell hits one of the other character instead.) If in combat within his fog, Bras-Coupé will typically maneuver to strike opponents from behind, focusing on isolated opponents. Unless he is aware that attackers have been specifically hunting him, he will usually not fight to kill but rather will be satisfied to leave those he encounters wounded and, presumably, terrified.

Bras-Coupé can *pass without trace* three times a day, and twice a day he can invoke *invisibility* for 2d3 turns.

Bras-Coupé is immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, *death* magic, poison, and cold-based spells. Holy water inflicts 2-8 damage to him for each vial of such water that contacts his skin; similarly, forced contact with a holy symbol does 2-8 damage. Bras-Coupé can be turned as a vampire. Bras-Coupé takes only 1 point of damage from bullet wounds; he can be damaged normally by other weapons, but if the wound that reduces him to less than 1 hit point is not made by a weapon of unalloyed iron that has had a *bless* cast on it, Bras-Coupé's body will reanimate the following round with full hit points restored to him. If a weapon of unalloyed iron is used to reduce him to less than 1 hit point, then his body remains inert for 2d4 days, after which it reanimates (with full hit points) and seeks cruel vengeance against its attackers. If Bras-Coupé's inert body is wrapped tightly in iron chains and his feet are shackled in iron, he will not reanimate. Should the chains or shackles ever be removed, however, Bras-Coupé will return to animated undeath with full hit points and a very unpleasant disposition. A *resurrection* cast on Bras-Coupé will restore him to full hit points but have no additional effect. If Bras-Coupé's body is destroyed (e.g., by fire), it will reform in 3d4 months in a bayou southwest of New Orleans and begin its trek north around Lake Pontchartrain and then east toward the Atlantic Coast. If

<b>2d6 roll</b>	<b>Odor of Death Effect</b>
<b>2-3</b>	Character falls under the mental control of Bras-Coupé as if they were a zombie for 1d6

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: GOTHIC EARTH

unhindered, he will eventually reach Savannah or Charleston, and there he will board a ship headed to Africa or the Mediterranean, his ultimate goal being Africa, the home of his ancestors. It is unlikely that the captain of the ship will survive the voyage.

## THE FOG'S FURY

This adventure is for three to five characters levels 3-5 (about 14 levels total). PCs who have previously encountered Francisco Garcia in New Orleans and learned his history may find the adventure more interesting than those who are unfamiliar with Bras-Coupé, but no knowledge of Bras-Coupé's history is required to complete this adventure successfully. The DM can use this as an initial encounter with Bras-Coupé that would then send the heroes tracking down information about the zombie lord and, hopefully, determining how to defeat him. While the adventure familiarizes heroes with Bras-Coupé's methods, it does not reveal much about his motives, and therefore it may frustrate players who believe that adventures should come to conclusions in which all secrets are revealed.

The adventure takes place between May and September; if the DM runs the adventure at a different time of the year, some of the descriptions of the environment will have to be changed. For instance, the hardwood trees would be bare of leaves, and the magnolias wouldn't be in bloom.

## Background

Samuel Wilcox is a commercial trader originally from Boston who purchased a southern Mississippi Plantation from its bankrupt owner shortly after the Civil War. Fairly isolated, the plantation consisted of a large manor house, a separate kitchen, servants' quarters, and acres of farmland devoted to a variety of grains and legumes. Calling his new home "Blossomland," Wilcox brought his wife and their newborn daughter to live there. Three years later, his wife contracted yellow fever during a visit to New Orleans and died.

Wilcox's daughter, Camomile, grew into an adult and became a school teacher in Biloxi, a city some distance to the south. There she married Lucien Baines, a shipping agent and business associate of her father, and the two of them produced a blond-haired son, Jeremy. Four years later, Lucien was shot to death during a robbery, and Camomile and her son returned to her father's home where they have lived since. Camomile has devoted herself to raising Jeremy, and so she has

abandoned her teaching career, at least for the time being.

On a business visit to New Orleans, Samuel had his fortune told by Marie LeVeau *fille*, the well-known seer and daughter of the "Voodoo Queen" of New Orleans. Although normally inclined to label such things as "superstitious nonsense," Samuel took to heart LeVeau's warning that he and his family were in grave danger from "the death that walks by night." She also told him to "beware the fog" and "a danger from your past will resurface." She was unaware of the specific nature of the threat to Samuel and his family, but she did feel strong premonitions that something evil would soon happen. Samuel immediately made plans to return home to his daughter and grandson.

## The Adventure Begins

PCs must travel to Blossomland to get involved with the events about to happen there, and there are a variety of ways to get them there. If they are in New Orleans and well known, Samuel Wilcox could seek them out to hire them to investigate and thwart the danger to his family. He could also encounter them accidentally, size them up, and invite them into employment. Wilcox will arrange for a coach to bring the heroes to Blossomland, while he himself will depart immediately, so he will be present when the PCs arrive.

Alternatively, the PCs could be hired by someone else from just about any location to deliver important documents to Wilcox at Blossomland. Wilcox will receive them when they arrive, and he will offer them dinner and beds for the night after they show their credentials and give him the documents.

The trip takes approximately six hours from New Orleans, including occasional stops in small towns to give the horses a rest and the passengers a chance to stretch their legs. The DM may insert incidental encounters during the trip, but the PCs should remain sufficiently undamaged to withstand the first encounter with Bras-Coupé at Blossomland.

## Blossomland

The road has been long and flat for some time, and great green and brown fields stretch out to either side of it as far as the eye can see. The fields are interrupted infrequently by small copses of hardwood trees, their thick, leaf-covered branches reaching out and upward to the almost cloudless sky. Eventually, you pass through an open metal gate that bears the name of your destination—Blossomland. You can barely make out the sign in the late evening sun. Both sides of the road beyond the gate are lined with blossoming magnolia

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: GOTHIC EARTH

trees, their great white flowers hanging like pale faces that watch the carriage as it passes by. Finally, the rows of trees end, and before you is a two-story mansion.

The carriage comes to a stop in front of the colonnade that protects the facade of the building. The walls were once white, but they've yellowed with age and don't appear to have been tended to in some time. Large, dark windows are spaced between the columns; the windows on the far left appear to be boarded up. Two large, wooden doors, dark green in color, stand silently at the top of the stairs in the middle of the building.

The mansion is approximately 110 years old and faces the south. Wilcox and his family live in the eastern half of the mansion, and the western half has been for the most part neglected for the past thirty years.

The carriage driver will carry the PCs' baggage to the doors of the mansion and deposit them there. He will wait by the carriage until he receives a tip from one of the passengers. If it appears that none will be forthcoming, the dark, muscular man will say, "I hope the ride met with your satisfaction." If this hint is not enough to get his tip, then he'll spit in disgust, clamber on his carriage and ride away. He is not a talkative fellow, and this is only his second trip to Blossomland, having delivered a crate of linen here two months earlier.

If the heroes knock on the door, it will be answered by Wilcox himself. If he is expecting the PCs, then he will bid them enter and direct them to rooms for the evening. If he is not expecting them, then they will have to introduce themselves and explain their presence, and then he will invite them in and suggest they spend the night. While he not normally in the habit of inviting strangers into his home, he is afraid some supernatural horror threatens his family and welcomes the presence of additional mortal bodies.

If the heroes decide to investigate the mansion by going around to the back, they'll see the servants' quarters some 50 feet behind the mansion. These quarters are small, providing only enough room for the two servants to have a small room to themselves. The roof extends out past the west side of the quarters, and under this shelter are housed Wilcox's two riding horses. As they come around the mansion, the PCs will encounter Clarence Franklin, who will direct them gruffly back to the front door.

**Samuel Wilcox, 5<sup>th</sup>-level tradesman:** AC 10; MV 12; HD 5; hp 19; THAC0 18; #AT 2; Dmg 3d6 (shotgun); SA none; SD None; SZ M (5'8"); Age 62; ML average (10); AL LN; XP 175.

S 7 D 8 C 12 I 17 W 12 Ch 11

*Personality:* haughty, stern

A moderately prosperous commercial merchant, Samuel Wilcox is a short, grey-haired man with a permanent scowl on his face. Except at meals, he is always smoking a cigar. He is very concerned about his appearance and usually wears a shirt, pants, and jacket from before breakfast until he retires for the evening. His clothes are moderately expensive, but close examination shows most of them to be quite worn. Samuel is generally friendly, although recent events have afflicted him with a nervous fear. He is always very short with Clarence Franklin, and, before others, with Helen Kilpatrick. He dotes on his grandson.

Details of the mansion are left for the DM to design. The first floor of the eastern half consists of a kitchen, a pantry, a large dining room, and a smaller sitting room/den; each of these rooms except the pantry has a fireplace. The second floor of the eastern half contains five bedrooms; three of these are occupied by Samuel, his daughter, and his grandson, leaving two bedrooms for the heroes. Each bedroom contains a double bed, a chest of drawers, and a wash table and basin. There's enough room for up to 2 characters to sleep on the floor of each of the bedrooms. There is a relatively modern bathroom on this floor as well. The heroes are provided keys to the two empty bedrooms, both of which are on the north side of the house.

On the first floor of the western half is a grand ballroom and a library. Doors to these rooms are locked; Samuel and his daughter have the only keys to the rooms. No one has entered these rooms in at least twenty years. The ballroom is covered with dust; the southern half of the westernmost wall is covered with a spider web-like water stain. The room smells strongly of mildew. The walls of the library contain embedded bookshelves, none of which contain any books, as these were all removed by the previous owner when he abandoned the mansion. The second floor of the western half of the mansion contains six bedrooms and another bath; with some cleaning, four of these bedrooms could be used, but the other two have suffered from leaking rain, and the mattresses and carpet are covered with noisome mildew. The bath room on this side of the mansion is in disrepair and there is no water flowing to it, as Wilcox had the pipes to it closed when he decided to board up the western half of the mansion. Upstairs, a locked door separates the hallways between the western half of the mansion and the eastern half of the mansion.

As you are storing your belongings in your new rooms, a large man comes down the hallway and announces that

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dinner is being served. The man stands some 6'2" tall, and the shadows of the hallway make his skin appear as dark as night. His clothes are dark as well; only the grey curly hair that covers the top of his head keeps him from blending into the shadows completely. As quickly as he appears and makes his announcement, he turns and heads back to the stairway.

If the heroes met Clarence Franklin earlier, then they will recognize this as the same man. He will not make any effort to identify himself in either encounter, although if pressed he may admit that he works for "Mister Wilcox."

## **Clarence Franklin, 4<sup>th</sup>-level tradesman**

**(Laborer):** AC 8 (Dex bonus); MV 12; HD 4; hp 16; THAC0 17 (includes Str bonus); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (machete; +3 Str bonus); SA none; SD +2 on saves vs. death magic, paralysis, petrification, poison, and polymorph; SZ M (6'2"); Age 48; ML elite (13); AL LN; XP 175.

S 18/51 D 16 C 13 I 10 W 9 Ch 10

*Personality:* irritable, surly

Franklin prefers not to speak, particularly to white characters or black characters who associate with whites. He hates Samuel, but he remains in service at Blossomland because he promised his older sister that he would watch over her daughter, Helen, who is also a servant at Blossomland. Franklin feels no affection toward Wilcox's daughter and grandson, but he does feel responsible for protecting them as part of the terms of his employment. He has been encouraging Helen to leave Blossomland and move to Biloxi or New Orleans, but she has refused to do so.

## Dinner

At dinner, the heroes dine with Wilcox, his daughter, Camomile, and her son, Jeremy. It's dark outside by the time dinner is served (by Franklin), and the room is lit by gas lamps and the fireplace. Wilcox is generally quiet during dinner, but Camomile and Jeremy are happy to talk to new faces, and they'll make polite conversation with the heroes throughout dinner, perhaps asking one of them to tell of some previous adventure. Afterward, Camomile will take a reluctant Jeremy upstairs to bed, and Wilcox will tell the heroes of his encounter with Marie LeVeau and of the dangers she warned him of.

If asked about possible dangers from his past, Wilcox can provide no response. He will explain that, while he has had some competitors in his trading business, he has always dealt with them fairly and

cordially, and he cannot identify any that would bear him some grudge.

The household retires at 10 PM; all outside doors are locked, but most of the upstairs windows are left open so air can circulate through and cool the house.

## **Camomile Wilcox Baines, 2<sup>nd</sup>-level tradesman:**

AC 10; MV 12; HD 2; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (fist); SA none; SD none; SZ M (5'8"); Age 31; ML unsteady (6); AL LG; XP 35.

S 8 D 10 C 11 I 16 W 14 C 15

*Personality:* soft-spoken, kind-hearted

An attractive brunette, Camomile loves both her father and her son as well as Blossomland, but having lived away for several years, she's beginning to feel the need to leave it again and return to teaching, the profession for which she was trained. She hasn't mentioned her desire to her father or her son, but she's been planning to leave Blossomland once Jeremy turns nine, perhaps for New Orleans or Atlanta. She is respectful to Franklin and friendly with Helen. She has noticed that her father is unusually agitated since his return from New Orleans, but she hasn't had the opportunity to talk to him privately and would never consider doing so in front of strangers.

## **Jeremy Baines, 0-level child:**

AC 10; MV 9; HD ½; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (slingshot); SA None; SD None; SZ S (3'10"); Age 8; ML unsteady (7); AL NG; XP 7.

S 6 D 11 C 9 I 9 W 10 Ch 12

*Personality:* innocent, inquisitive

Jeremy is a very intelligent child, no doubt the result of his mother's being a trained teacher. He has blond, curly hair and a ruddy complexion. He is eager to learn more about the world outside of Blossomland, as he has few memories of his life in Biloxi. He will provide a very interested audience to any heroes willing to recount stories of their adventures, although his mother will discourage any talk of the supernatural if she hears it.

## The First Night

The night sky is full of stars, and the crescent moon provides little light to illuminate Blossomland's fields.

If any of the heroes remain awake and on guard, they may notice a low lying fog approaching the mansion from the north. If unhindered, the fog, which hides Bras-Coupé and a zombie under his control, will come up to the western half of the house. Bras-Coupé will tear the boards from the window and aid the zombie into the mansion through the window. The zombie will enter the

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ballroom, make its way to the locked door, and then, finding it cannot open the door, will beat on it, waking the rest of the household. Wilcox and Franklin will both come immediately to the door, and Wilcox will shout “Who’s there?” at the door. The pounding will cease, and Wilcox will unlock and open the door. The zombie will attack whoever opens the door, preferring to attack Wilcox if possible. On seeing the zombie, which is barely recognizable as his long-dead wife, Wilcox will be overcome with fear: He will be unable to move for three rounds and unable to protect himself. If he’s still alive after those three rounds, he will back slowly into the dining room where he will faint. Camomile will not witness these events, as upon hearing the commotion, she goes to Jeremy’s room to make sure he remains safe. If Wilcox is the victim of the zombie’s initial attack, Franklin will pause one round before he attacks the zombie with his machete. Once the zombie is defeated, he will tell the PCs that it used to be Wilcox’s wife and was buried in the graveyard half a mile northwest of the mansion.

If the PCs battle the zombie before it reaches the house, they will have to enter the fog as well as Bras-Coupé’s odor of death to do so. Bras-Coupé is surprised to see additional adversaries at the mansion, so he will direct the zombie to attack the heroes while he watches them to see how powerful they are. If any of the heroes come under his control, he will use them to attack the other heroes. If his zombie is defeated, Bras-Coupé will depart, keeping his obscuring fog about him, until he disappears into some trees north of the mansion. If pursued into the trees, he will use *pass without trace* to elude anyone hunting him; if this is ineffective, he will resort to invisibility. He will not lead the heroes to the graveyard where he animated his zombie.

If the zombie is defeated before it enters the mansion, then Wilcox and Franklin, having heard the commotion of the fight, come out to investigate and discover the body of Wilcox’s wife. Wilcox faints and Franklin identifies the body. Camomile and Jeremy remain undisturbed in their beds. Helen watches from the door to the servants’ quarters.

**Beatrice Wilcox, zombie:** AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 9; THAC0: 19; #AT: 1; Dmg: 1d8; SA none; SD undead immunities to spells; SZ M (5’9”); ML special; Int special; AL N; XP 175.

Notes: Because Beatrice is being controlled by Bras-Coupé, it does suffer any initiative penalties in combat.

## The Next Day

Any heroes who attempted to pursue Bras-Coupé the night before will eventually return unsuccessful.

The following day, Camomile will be distraught, having heard of the reappearance of her mother’s body. If the zombie was not otherwise destroyed, Clarence will have taken the body into the library, where he will have decapitated it and left it to lie. The door to the ballroom is again locked. Clarence will spend the rest of the day nailing new boards to replace the ones pulled from the ballroom window and he’ll also replace those on other windows to make sure they’re secure. Later, he begins boarding up the windows on the eastern half of the mansion, although he won’t finish them all before nightfall.

Wilcox will spend the day in bed. He has not quite recovered from the previous night’s shock or injuries.

The heroes will likely want to visit the graveyard where Beatrice had been buried. Camomile will suggest they ask Helen to take them there, and Helen will agree to do so either just before or just after lunch. Any PCs who are mystics will recognize Helen as one, although she will be unwilling to discuss her abilities in front of others.

The heroes may also want to investigate the western half of the mansion. One of the bedrooms was originally to be Beatrice’s bedroom, and some of her personal belongings remain there, although none of these will be helpful against Bras-Coupé. The DM may also create additional encounters—perhaps with small animals that have managed to sneak into the mansion and take up residence in the abandoned rooms.

There’s not a great deal more for PCs to do during the day. Camomile might be open to a romance with an eligible PC, although protecting Jeremy is her top priority at the moment.

**Helen Kilpatrick, 3<sup>rd</sup>-level mystic (Medium):** AC 10; MV 12; HD 3; hp 11; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (pocket knife); SA Spells; SD Spells; SZ M (5’10”); Age 28; AL NG; XP 120.

S 10 D 12 C 10 I 13 W 17Ch 15.

*Personality:* cautious, kind

**Spells (3/2):** *bless, detect poison, locate animals or plants, purify food and drink; detect charm, speak with animals.*

A beautiful woman with smooth, medium brown skin, Helen has worked at Blossomland for 12 years, and during the past four she has become very attached to Camomile and Jeremy. Unfortunately, she recently has also had to deal with unwanted advances from Samuel, and she avoids him whenever possible. She knows that if her uncle Clarence were to learn of Samuel’s actions, he would kill Samuel, so she has not told him. Helen herself would have left Blossomland already, but she has had a feeling that there was some danger approaching for



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the past several months so she has remained in the hope that she can help protect Camomile and Jeremy when that danger comes. She is wary of strangers who come to Blossomland, although the appearance of Beatrice convinces her that any living strangers are not the danger she has sensed coming.

## The Graveyard

Helen leads you to a small plot of land surrounded by a rusted iron fence and under the shadow of a tall magnolia. The fence consists of dark iron bars approximately a yard tall and spaced half a foot apart. The bars are topped with sharp, four-sided spikes. A gate opens on the west side of the fence. Inside are two tombstones and two graves, both of which appear recently disturbed. From each of the graves, the ground has been excavated and thrown aside, and peering into them you can see they are both empty. Helen gasps in surprise as she looks at the graves. The closest tombstone reads "Beatrice Mariel Jennings Wilcox, Beloved Wife" and the other one reads "Lucien Andrew Baines, Loved and Missed by Wife and Son."

The second stone is obviously much newer than the first, and Helen will confirm that it was set in place just four years earlier. Neither of the stones is marked with date of birth or death, at Samuel's request. The iron fence is almost 30 years old and rusted.

The magnolia tree is not inside the iron fence.

## The Second Night

It is likely the heroes will take some type of precautions prior to nightfall to thwart a second attack. If there are obvious changes to the environment around the mansion (pits, etc.) that might obstruct Bras-Coupé's attack, then he will change his plans accordingly. If he falls into a trap set by the PCs, then his primary goal will be to escape so he can try again the following night. If he is again frustrated on the third night, then he will abandon his attacks until the PCs leave the mansion. Once they are gone, he should have no trouble killing Wilcox and escaping into the night.

Bras-Coupé's plan of attack for the second night involves creating a distraction while his recently animated zombie attacks the mansion. He has sent his zombie, Lucien Baines, south of the mansion and given him instructions to come to the mansion once Bras-Coupé signals him. This signal is to be the burning servants' quarters. However, when Bras-Coupé approaches the servants' quarters (invisibly, if necessary), his odor of death affects both Clarence and Helen. She loses the use of her left arm; he, on the other

hand, dies instantly. Instead of burning the quarters, Bras-Coupé abducts Helen, hoping to lead pursuers away from the mansion so that Lucien can do his job unhindered. Bras-Coupé will not be using *obscurement* during this pursuit, as he does want to be followed, so the heroes will see Helen in the arms of a large, one-armed black man who moves steadily away from the mansion. Once pursuers come close enough for melee, Bras-Coupé will drop Helen and summon his fog for protection.

Bras-Coupé will not flee so far that he cannot maintain control of Lucien and Clarence. When Clarence rises as a zombie, he sets fire to the servants' quarters and then goes to the mansion, using his key to let himself in. Simultaneously, Lucien approaches the house and eventually knocks on the door. Bras-Coupé expects Camomile to open the door and be too shocked by the appearance of her dead husband to keep him from entering; unless one of the PCs is with her when she sees her husband, she becomes completely paralyzed, backing into the doorway to the ballroom and then sitting in a ball on the floor, crying. Lucien will climb the stairs to the second floor and attempt to strangle Wilcox.

**Lucien Baines, zombie:** AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA strangulation; SD undead immunities to spells; SZ M (5'9"); ML special; Int special; AL N; XP 175.

Notes: Because Lucien is being controlled by Bras-Coupé, he does not suffer any initiative penalties in combat. If Lucien makes a successful attack, he grasps the victim's neck and strangles them, doing 1d4 damage automatically during subsequent rounds. The victim must make a successful Strength check at -2 to escape Lucien's grasp.

Meanwhile, Clarence has used the stairway from the kitchen to reach the second floor; his objective is not Wilcox, however, but Jeremy. He enters Jeremy's room, picks up the sleeping boy, and carries him out of the house. Assuming he is still unnoticed, he places the boy a safe distance from the house and then he sets the mansion on fire using burning wood from the servants' quarters.

**Clarence Franklin, zombie:** AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA none; SD undead immunities to spells; SZ M (5'9"); ML special; Int special; AL N; XP 175.

Notes: Because Clarence is being controlled by Bras-Coupé, he does not suffer any initiative penalties in combat.

Bras-Coupé will not be attacking to kill, although he won't be pulling punches either. Some time after he sees the servants' quarters burning, he will attempt to communicate with the heroes:

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For a moment, the fog appears to thin, and you can see the dark form of your opponent before you. Bits of flesh hang from his face, and his white eyes appear to glow as he speaks. Unfortunately, his words are difficult to understand, and the only ones you can make out are “Wilcox dead... be free.” Then the fog thickens again, as if it is under your opponent’s control.

After speaking to the heroes, Bras-Coupé ceases attacking them. Soon, the fog thins out and the heroes can see Helen lying still on the ground. She will have regained the use of her arm, but she’s still quite frightened. The heroes can also see the burning servants’ quarters by this time, and, of course, they can see the mansion if it is burning as well. Up until this time, the fog would have obscured their sight of either of these.

Bras-Coupé will head back to the mansion to verify that Wilcox has been killed. He can confirm that event by speaking with Lucien (requiring that Bras-Coupé touch the zombie) or by seeing that the mansion has burned sufficiently that Samuel must have been killed. Unless he actually sees Samuel, he will assume Samuel did not escape. Having satisfied his urge, Bras-Coupé will head eastward.

## After the Flames

Helen is familiar with the legend of Bras-Coupé and can tell the heroes of it. She does not know that the assailant was Bras-Coupé, but it certainly appears likely. She is not aware of the various attacks that have taken place before this one, but police in New Orleans and Biloxi are aware of some of them. Clever heroes might be able to put clues from these authorities together and figure out when and where Bras-Coupé might strike next, if he survived this encounter. Marie LeVeau *filie* is also a good source of information about Bras-Coupé; for a suitable fee, she could determine the zombie lord’s location (to within 5 miles) and reveal that iron is its weakness.

If the heroes defeated Bras-Coupé but did not destroy him or render him inert with chains and shackles, then he will return and seek them out. He will not be impatient about his vengeance, however, and he will wait for an opportune time to attack. If the heroes travel from Blossomland to New Orleans, they could become involved in a confrontation between Francisco Garcia and Bras-Coupé; the former of which will be terrified of the zombie lord, but Bras-Coupé will have no memory of Francisco. Francisco could inadvertently restore some of the zombie lord’s memories and earn Bras-Coupé’s wrath, but as there’s not a great deal they can do to one

another they might look to the party for help in bringing about the other’s defeat.

If Wilcox did not die, Bras-Coupé will wait until he has less protection and then attack again, provided he hasn’t set off after the heroes instead. After they have performed their functions, Bras-Coupé relinquishes control of Lucien and Clarence. Lucien falls as a corpse; however, Clarence remains animated and follows the last command he received: Protect Jeremy. Camomile will not be overly excited to have the zombie around and will probably ask the heroes to destroy it. Helen will ask the same thing so her uncle’s soul can be put to rest. Helen is unaware that she has the ability to turn undead, but she will attempt it if someone suggests it to her.

Wilcox’s two horses will have fled while the servants’ quarters burned; however, they will not have fled far, and Helen should be able to coax them back in an hour or so.

Camomile, Helen, and Jeremy obviously need a new place to stay. Camomile will have sufficient income from her inheritance to support her household in New Orleans or Atlanta, although she might be persuaded to move elsewhere if she has developed a romance with a persuasive PC. In any event, the three of them will ask for an escort to one of the two cities. Camomile will offer the PCs payment for the services they provided her father.

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: THE PARENTS

## Matthew "Dead Man Talking" Ball

☠ **Lord & Lady Berra** ☠

☠ **Mordecai Weddingham** ☠

I'm not really sure if the worlds of Gothic Earth and Ravenloft need more villains loosed upon their surface, but hopefully some campaign will get some use from the Berras and Weddingham. Credit must be given to the writings of August Derleth, Mack Reynolds, and Seabury Quinn—their stories have served as an inspiration in a creation of these Children. Finally, I'd like to take a brief moment to dedicate *That People* to anyone who has ever felt the slightest suspicion towards a cat. Until the next time.

[mball@istar.ca](mailto:mball@istar.ca)

## Joe Bardales

Kargatane

☠ **Kargatane: Jaerdaph Baeloss** ☠

Joe Bardales is pleased to have had the opportunity to work on another Kargatane NetBook for Ravenloft. He would like to dedicate his Kargatane alter ego, Jaerdaph Baeloss, to his fellow Kargatane, who most suffer eternally for knowing them both...

[joe@kargatane.com](mailto:joe@kargatane.com)

## Bil Boozer

☠ **Bras-Coupé** ☠

☠ **Francisco Garcia** ☠

*Silly us! It's interrogate, then execute! You wouldn't believe how often we get that wrong. Well, perhaps we can have a second try at persuading Mr. Boozer to tell us all he knows after we've sewn his head back on...*

[billboozer@gsu.edu](mailto:billboozer@gsu.edu)

## Charles Brown

Kargatane

☠ **Kargatane: Drawden Selrach** ☠

Born in a small Michigan town some 30 years ago, Charles Brown was introduced to the horrors of life at an early age. Finding that he *liked* them, he soon relocated to Ravenloft.

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## Andrew Cermak

☠ **Louis Giroume** ☠

☠ **The Green Man** ☠

At the time of this netbook's release, I will be just barely 20 years old and will have hopefully finally received my expected registration materials for San Jose State, where

I will be continuing and perhaps concluding my academic career. I took my first tentative steps into the world of role-playing at the impressionable age of 10 and haven't given it up since. My preferred games are

RAVENLOFT and CHAMPIONS (now there's a contrast for you). I'd like to thank the Kargatane for this opportunity to get some of the ideas out of my head and onto something of semi-permanence, thereby saving the Green Man and Monsieur Giroume from vanishing into the Mists of my mind, and my girlfriend of 2 years, Jennifer, for being my light in the fog.

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## "Jack the Reaper"

☠ **Gedhem** ☠

☠ **Hungry Lucy** ☠

☠ **Ishmael abd-Rabbo** ☠

Gedhem Rosh-Peger is a good example for an inspiration found in unlikely places. I first came upon the idea of a living, disembodied wizard head in the children book *Kaytush the Sorcerer*, by the Polish author Yanush Kortchak. It was nothing more than a brief reference, but that was enough to set the gears in my head into work. The readers may be interested to know that the meaning of "Gedhem," in Hebrew, is "Stump." That's the way I usually pick names for my NPCs...

The concept of a sense-draining monster is not new; readers familiar with the old D&D boxes might have already noticed the similarities between Ishmael Abd-Rabbo and the ravanar from the *Guide to the Master* box. I made several attempts at creating another sense-destroying monster in the past, some of which were quite bizarre (like giant worms with blinding, flashing lights, ears-piercing screams and acrid smell), but eventually decided that an undead creature like Ishmael is the most appropriate choice for a Ravenloft villain. I find the concept of losing one's senses to be most horrifying (much of that because of its realism), and I hope you'll find Ishmael a useful tool as well.

Hungry Lucy is one of my favorite NPCs. Believe it or not, the name is taken from a real-world haunting case, described in Hans Holzer's *Great American Ghost Stories*. The similarities end at the name, though—the real Hungry Lucy was an older girl, whose ghost did nothing more than pound on walls and talk through mediums. I just took the name from the novel, and tailored an entirely different tale around it. I do such things at every opportunity.

I would like to dedicate my articles to the following people: Mattan Leibovich (for setting me on the path), Moshe Goldstein (for letting me enjoy of the doubt), Golberz the Hobgoblin (for the stories and lousy servitude), Moshe Ratt (for the scythe and robes), and, lastly, to all the friends at the Ravenloft Mailing List. Hit the road, and don't fear the reaper!

[avirath@mofet.macam98.ac.il](mailto:avirath@mofet.macam98.ac.il)

## Jeremy W. Kiesling

☠ **Night Blossom** ☠

*When the Kargatane asked for personal details, Jeremy stepped into the Shadow Rift, promising to return in "just a minute." We suppose we should have warned him about the temporal fugue...*

[Kies9528@mailclerk.ecok.edu](mailto:Kies9528@mailclerk.ecok.edu)

## "Liederick"

☠ **Angelique Molière** ☠

I honestly can't remember the story that inspired me to write the history of Angelique Moliere, other than that it was a modern-age television show, and the 'portrait' was actually a film. The whole thing had a suitable amount of horror, and when I was looking for a villain that was (for a change) not an undead/lycanthrope/monster-in-disguise, the story popped into my mind. And of course I loved to do something with Dominic d'Honaire, who has been neglected for way too long.

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## Jarrold Lowe

☠ **Leonardo da Vinci** ☠

Jarrold Lowe is a co-webmaster and a major contributor to the *Ravenloft: Our Place in the Mists* website. He is a 22 year-old college student currently residing in a large pink apartment complex, situated smack dab in the middle of the Daniel Boone National Forest. He is currently serving as DM to two parties of rabid adventure freaks, in both Ravenloft and Masque of the Red Death campaigns. One of his creature creations, one Donovan Kaizer, was published in 1997's *Book of Souls*. His current aspirations include becoming a world class supermodel, a championship professional wrestler, as well as securing a position as a road technician on any future Pearl Jam world tours.

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# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: THE PARENTS

John W. Mangrum

Kargatane

☠ **Dunkel Kralle** ☠

☠ **Marcu Vasilis** ☠

☠ **Kargatane: William Gruhman** ☠

When these “mini-netbooks” were first proposed, one of my fellow Kargatane mentioned that they wouldn’t be as much work as the *Book of Souls*. Ah, how we look back on that comment and laugh ... not to mention we’re now busy slowly crushing said Kargatane under a great many large stones. But we do it with love.

[iggy@kargatane.com](mailto:iggy@kargatane.com)

Christopher

Dale Nichols

Kargatane

☠ **Kargatane: Holder Crosspen** ☠

There are things in this world which no man should know. Small things that lurk and titter and gibber in the shadows. Huge improbable horrors shuffling in the gaps and angles of time and space. A slow rot at the core, in the heart of humanity. The cold, uncaring universe and the cruel dark stars that whirl madly above. And, the inhuman fanboy thing known only as Chris Nichols. Flee while your sanity remains!

[chris@kargatane.com](mailto:chris@kargatane.com)

Marcin Perkowski

☠ **Jan Kryniewicki** ☠

*Funny thing; every time we try to send a messenger to contact Marcin in Bialystok, they vanish without a trace. Perhaps we should map them a new route that doesn’t involve hiking through those wolf-infested forests...*

[ravenkin@polbox.com](mailto:ravenkin@polbox.com)

Charles Phipps

☠ **Lord Louis Randeem** ☠

Lord Louis Randeem was the result of combining aspects of some of my favorite works: “The Most Dangerous Game,” “The Ghost and the Darkness” and “Heart of Darkness.” I’d like to thank the Kargatane for their gentle critiquing which helped make it the best work it could be and dedicate it to them.

[tcp@ramlink.net](mailto:tcp@ramlink.net)

Marco A. T orres

☠ **Marie Annette** ☠

☠ **Evan LaMorte** ☠

☠ **Marsal Ulok** ☠

I am currently a junior in high school. My plans are to attend college, with a major in Psychology and Literature, and I hope to someday become a TV writer. Most of my inspiration comes from music, as well as my family and friends, especially my brother Hugo, sister Tania, and best friend Andrew. Without their support, as well as that of my parents, I would have no muse for my creations.

[JawaLad@aol.com](mailto:JawaLad@aol.com)

Barry T revelyan

Kargatane

☠ **Kargatane: Ryven Trylbare** ☠

*How dare you say he’s dead! That’s terribly offensive; Ryven’s obviously just deep in thought...*

[barry@kargatane.com](mailto:barry@kargatane.com)

# FORGOTTEN CHILDREN: THE PARENTS

Stuart Turner

Kargatane

☠ **Barton DeForet** ☠

☠ **Kargatane: Ernst Turagdon** ☠

If you remember when I first posted the Rebirth adventure to the Ravenloft Mailing List, then it's a sign that you've been involved with Ravenloft on the net for far too long! Rebirth was the second adventure of my current Ravenloft campaign, and it owes a great deal of thanks to an episode of the short-lived

British horror series *Chiller*.

Thanks, as always, goes to the rest of the Kargatane for their friendship, advice and effort during the hectic creation of these netbooks. I couldn't imagine a bunch of rotting corpses I'd rather hang around with...

[stu@kargatane.com](mailto:stu@kargatane.com)

Benjamin

"Wolfshadow" Zolberg

☠ **Anton de Marrisette** ☠

I dedicate my article to my friend and master, Jack the Reaper, for guiding me through the mists.

no address

Andrew C. Wyatt

☠ **Bites-the-Rattlesnake** ☠

Bites-the-Rattlesnake was originally a villain from a standard Ravenloft campaign, but the Kargatane sagely advised that he worked better as a servant of the Red Death. *Van Richten's Guide to the Ancient Dead* and my passion for Native American culture were my inspirations. I've loved Ravenloft ever since I saw those Mists curling around the Core on the black box map, and the first AD&D adventure I ever ran was *Night of the Walking Dead*. I'm a bona fide Kargat and Kargatane worshipper, and I manage my own

Ravenloft website, *The Lonesome Road*

(<http://come.to/lonesomeroad>). Oh, and when I'm not gaming, I'm busy being an environmental science grad student. Special thanks to the Kargatane for

giving a non-canon fellow a chance!

"The Hope College Gamers are the greatest gamers in the world!"

[sphodros@geocities.com](mailto:sphodros@geocities.com)